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An exploration into change management perceptions and approaches of two provincial government departments

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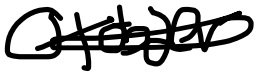
A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witswatersrand, in 50% requirement of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management Governance (Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation)

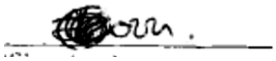
Signed Dr Christine Hobden (Supervisor): 

Abstract

Change in the South African public sector is unavoidable due to the turbulent political and economic climate and developing technologies presented to us by the 4th industrial revolution. It is widely acknowledged that organizational change is often plagued by failure, however, this study argues that contextual organisational dimensions such as deep structures and change ownership are frequently overlooked in public sector change management discussions. This prompted a qualitative case study between two Gauteng Provincial Government departments. This design enabled an in-depth exploration of approaches to change management in the two different departments to gain a better understanding of change management approaches within the GPG. Data was collected from recorded 30–60-minute semi-structured interviews with 12 key informants (senior, middle, and junior management staff in the respective provincial departments) identified through purposive criterion & snowball sampling. Interviews were transcribed identifying emerging themes and codes aligned to answering the research questions. Additionally, a desktop review of academic literature, departmental documents, and reports was undertaken to gain deeper contextual understanding and perspective of the GPG change management landscape. The study results revealed that the nature of change is characterised by a lack of ownership and poor reinforcement of change in the GPG. Furthermore, that communication within GPG exists, however, it doesn't always filter down to the lowest employees.

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Master of Management Governance (Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



Zibusiso Khethiwe Ndlovu

23 June 2023

Dedication

To Kuhlekonke, my brown skin girl, I dedicate this project to you. May it be a reminder that you can achieve anything you put your mind to. I love you. Thank you for your understanding and support of mom.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost: to God, without whom which none of this would be possible, all the glory to You, my anchor!

Dr. Christine Hobden thank you for the support and access, guidance, patience, and constructive criticism. To my family (Mom, Dad, Musa), Esther Ndlebe, Lala, thank you for your unwavering support and understanding.

To my participants, thank you for your time, the institutional memory within the public service, your experience and knowledge provided a rich understanding of the public sector dynamics that influence change.

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List of abbreviations

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ASD	Assistant Director
BMT	Broad Management Team
CD	Chief Director
CM	Change Management
CMC	Core Management Criteria
DD	Deputy Director
DDG	Deputy Director General
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
e- Gov	Gauteng Department of e-Government
EMT	Executive Management Team
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GDOH	Gauteng Department of Health
GPG	Gauteng Provincial Government
GSSC	Gauteng Shared Services Centre
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KRA	Key Result Areas
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MMCF	Middle Management Competency Framework
MMS	Middle Management Services
MPSA	Minister of Public Service and Administration
MS	Microsoft
MST	Microsoft Teams
OCM	Organisational Change Management
OD	Organisation Development
ODC	Organisational Development and Change
OOP	Gauteng Office of the Premier
PMDS	Performance Management and Development Systems
PSA	Public Service Act, 1994
PSR	Public Service Regulations, 2016
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SMS	Senior Management Services

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Change in and of itself can be unpredictable, radical and revolutionise the way things are done, or it can be incremental and slowly modify how we do things. As human beings we manage change in various aspects of our lives (personal, professional, social) from the time that we are born, to the time that we die. Inherent in each of us, regardless of social status or standing is a manager of change. The differences in approach are informed by context, knowledge, capacity, and perception. Organisations are made up of a group of individuals who bring their awareness and experience as a manager of change into the work environment, and this contributes to individual change agility within the organisation.

Change management (CM) has been broadly defined over the years, by various academics and practitioners, in various sectors however, this study adopts the understanding that it is 'the process of continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal stakeholders' (Moran and Brightman, 2001: 111). It is hinged on the understanding that organisations may be forced to change because of a shift in the environment, the impact of covid-19 global pandemic being a case in point, or they may plan the change in advance. As an academic discipline, change management encompasses various aspects of change such as operational, structural or organisational changes which may be described as organisational activities and patterns designed to move it from a current state to a desired future state (Harigopal, 2006 in Stouten, Rousseau, De Cremer, 2018). This type of change may arise as a result of a merger of departments, or the appointment of a new political principal. Changes can be reactive, discontinuous, ad hoc, and often triggered by situations of organisational crisis (Todnem, 2005). This change may affect organisational culture. The concept of organisational cultural changes is then introduced as an aspect of change which has been widely defined as change that occurs whenever operational or organisational patterns and shared assumptions are disrupted (Barratt-Pugh & Bahn, 2015).

This study's perspective of organisational change is not limited to structural changes in terms of design but the facilitation of an organisational culture that supports individuals as they make personal transitions within the context of technology and organisational processes. Nelson (2016) posits that the goal of change management is not to force change, but rather to prepare people for the change (awareness), to help them understand the rationale and impact of the change (knowledge), and to provide the tools that will enable skills development (adoption) and skills integration that is, commitment and reinforcement. It is the responsibility of change management to ensure that people, processes and technologies are functioning optimally. The focus is frequently on technology without considering the impact on people and processes - or even worse, assuming people will figure it out on their own.

Successful change management requires a clear understanding of the type of change (finetuning, incremental, transformational, etc). Additionally, the adoption of appropriate change elements (human resources, technology, strategy) and a specific change process (top-down, bottom-up, or a mix) (Ratana, Raksmey, & Danut, 2021). These factors are greatly shaped by the context in which change takes place. Major issues can arise if the unique characteristics of the public sector context are not considered and addressed when implementing change (Piercy, Phillips, & Lewis, 2013; PSC, 2021). An explicit consideration of the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) departments' context is incorporated into this study.

The Gauteng Provincial Government Departments (GPG) have not been exempt from the waves of change that are blowing throughout the country. They are tasked with meeting a wide range of citizen needs with limited capacity amidst a multitude of challenges like the impact of state capture, which result in government inefficiencies experienced by citizens (Mbangeleli & Ojugbele, 2021; Piercy et al., 2013). When faced with prioritization of mandate implementation, change management is compromised.

This research report will be structured as follows; the research problem will be identified, thus justifying the need for this study. A literature review discussing Change Management and Organisational Development as a theoretical framework which will assist this research with explaining change management and locating it within a body of existing literature, drawing connections, and pointing out gaps in the literature.

Aspects of literature relevant to this study such as change management models and approaches to it are presented. Public sector dynamics will be expanded on, and the departmental case studies will be discussed providing context for this study. The study's adopted research methodology, approach and design as well as a sampling strategy will then be reviewed. This will be proceeded by an account of ways in which data was managed, analysed and interpreted. An outline of the study's limitations, feasibility and positionality is described before the presentation of the study's findings, discussions and finally conclusions are drawn.

1.1. Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore change approaches and mechanisms undertaken by provincial departments and examine what looking at the two departments reveals to us about change management at a Gauteng Provincial Government level. Additionally, this research sought to explore the perceptions that managers have on change management, departmental change approaches and what role a change management policy could play in the governance of change within the respective provincial government departments. This was done through a case study on two government departments namely the Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

Upon undertaking the study it was discovered that the e-GOV does not have an Organisation Development Directorate nor a change management function. These functions are centralised in the Gauteng office of the Premier (OoP). This was an unexpected finding. Whilst participants in e-GOV understood change management, they made reference to the fact that this function was centralised to the OoP and service providers. To obtain rich thick data, this study, therefore, found it necessary to broaden its scope by interviewing managers within the OoP, to gain understanding of the change management value chain. An in-depth exploration of approaches to change management at a provincial level was undertaken with the aim of gaining a better understanding of change management dynamics within provincial departments in Gauteng, from a South African perspective as there is an academic knowledge gap in this regard. This study aims to establish distinction of how public sector dynamics influence change management, not necessarily to make comparison versus the

private sector, but to explore the unique features of change in a case within the public sector.

1.2. Research Problem Statement

This section summarises the researcher's analytical analysis of previous research and links the literature to create an argument and a case for the proposed research (Newman & Covrig, 2013). The problem statement addresses why the study is worth doing, whether personal, practical or academic (Newman & Covrig, 2013).

As the well-known quote from Heraclitus claims “the only constant in life is change”. Emergent occurrences such as legislation changes, the covid 19 pandemic, the turbulent political and economic climate in South Africa and developing technologies presented to us by the 4th industrial revolution (4ir) demand for government departments to be equipped with tools to manage and facilitate change management processes efficiently in order to function optimally in addressing constituency needs, through service delivery. An example of the changes brought about by the covid-19 pandemic and the 4ir is that the country went into a national shut-down which necessitated remote working. Government departments responded by providing their employees with laptops and 3g sims to enable them to be accessible, to convene and attend meetings virtually, respond to emails and for service delivery to continue. Change is inevitable and more so due to the constant change of leadership as a result of unexpected cabinet reshuffles and every five years as required by South African law, therefore, change in the public sector is unavoidable (Malatjie & Montana, 2021). It is widely acknowledged that organizational change is often plagued by failure, which does not seem to make any sense (Heracleous & Bartunek, 2021). Poor success rates in implementing organisational change initiatives reveal serious challenges when it comes to institutionalizing and maintaining the change process (Mdletye, Coetzee, & Ukpere, 2014). A case in point could be that of slow progressing attempts at modernising or digitizing GPGs, such the implementation of the Employee Self Service (ESS). ESS is a GPG initiative that aims to streamline services such as leave application and approval, provide online management facilities to empower employees by providing simple services, quicker response times, to enhance employee time management and increase efficiency. Since its launch in

2018, five (5) years later, there are a sizeable number of employees that complete hard copies of leave forms. This is evidence of poor reinforcement in the GPG or remote working conditions as piloted during the covid19 pandemic, which disappeared almost as quickly as it was introduced in most provincial departments. Heracleous & Bartunek, (2021) argue that organisational dimensions such as deep structures and temporality are frequently overlooked in organisational failure literature and discussions.

Literature does not seem to differentiate between the management of change processes in the private and public sector (Stewart and Kringas, 2003; Klarner, Probst and Soparnot 2008 in Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia, & van der Voet, 2014). The supposition could be that academics don't fully appreciate the full differences and their implications. This is a fundamental misconception because these sectors operate differently and operate from different contexts. Academics argue that it is not sufficient to discuss the 'what works' questions in isolation without describing the context in which they were answered (Cukurova, Luckin, & Baines, 2018). Context is significant because it influences processes, change agility, comprehension, and informs decision-making. Innovation and its uptake are influenced by context (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017). Whilst studies have been conducted on conditions and challenges of innovation in the public sector, some of the results are not applicable nor generalisable to all country contexts (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017; Nograsek, 2012; Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2019). Heino, Knittle, Noone, Hasselman, & Hankonen, (2021) further add that interventions aimed at changing behaviour often fail to produce sustained effects, especially when applied to different contexts.

There are arguably an array of challenges within South African government departments, these challenges include but are not limited to; a) working in departmental siloes, b) lack of innovation, c) challenges in the implementation of functional digital transformation due to policy-related issues contributing to delays in unilateral change, d) the mismanagement and lack of coordination of change programmes, e) insufficient organisational communication, f) abuse of power and authority g) a turbulent political environment, h) lack of managerial capacity and commitment, i) the under usage of knowledge management, j) lack of progress monitoring and evaluation, k) delayed deliverable sign-off due to inefficiencies in

government l) complex decision-making layers (bureaucracy), m) unclear change management frameworks, n) poor interpretation and implementation of policy (Mabelebele, 2006; Iversen & Lousie, 2014; Manda, 2022). These are some of the challenges that influence the manner in which change management issues are addressed in practice and contribute to poor change success rates within the public sector.

A desktop review of the existing literature revealed that studies on change management approaches within South African government departments are lacking. The focus of organizational change research in public management is on changes at the sectoral or local government level. The effectiveness of Change Management techniques in the provincial government remains under researched, nor has it been critically questioned (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). The gap in literature means that there is insufficient knowledge or understanding of contextual issues that influence change management approaches in provincial government departments. This may be due to numerous factors that include but are not limited to the manner in which change management issues are addressed in practice (Nograsek, 2012).

Furthermore, there is a void in academic research literature on Gauteng provincial government departments with regard to the value and role of change management policies. Nograsek (2012) posits that poor change management strategies are the main cause of government change project failures. Roux (2002) asserts that no effective administrative action can take place if specific goals, objectives, guidelines and indicators have not been set. The apparent lack of a valid framework for organisational change management within organisations is evidenced by the poor outcome rates of many change management programmes implemented within the workplace (Glensor, 2010).

By exploring what current change management approaches, policies, processes exist in the identified provincial government departments, this study will contribute to the identified knowledge gap by providing context, perceptions and understanding of change management from the Gauteng Provincial Government perspective. This is significant because the purpose of research is to fundamentally contribute to a knowledge gap, to inform action.

1.3. Research question

The study interrogated the following research question:

1. What does an exploration of current change approaches in the e-Gov and GDE departments reveal to us about the nature of change management in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments?

Sub questions:

1.1 What are the current change practices, processes, policies, and mechanisms in place for the Gauteng Provincial Government departments?

1.2 How do managers in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments perceive and experience these change management approaches?

1.4. Research objectives

1. To obtain a clear understanding of the unique features of change practices, processes, policies, and mechanisms within the public sector through studying two Gauteng Provincial Government departments.

2. To understand the role that managers within the two Gauteng Provincial Government departments play as change champions.

3. To learn how these managers perceive and experience these change management approaches, relative to their roles, capacity and context.

1.5. Summary and conclusion of the chapter

Known as South Africa's economic heartland, the Gauteng Province has a strong economy. The GPG have not been exempt from the waves of change that are blowing throughout the country. Being considered as one of the provincial leaders regarding steering change and innovation for its residents, the focus is frequently on technology without considering the impact on people and processes - or even worse, assuming people will figure it out on their own. Having to meet a wide range of citizen needs with limited capacity amidst a multitude of challenges like the impact of state capture, result in government inefficiencies experienced by citizens (Mbangeleli & Ojugbele, 2021;

Piercy et al., 2013). When faced with prioritization of mandate implementation, change management is compromised.

This chapter outlined the research purpose, problem statement, research questions, research objectives thereby providing a basis and justification for this study. The structure of the entire research project is as follows: chapter 2: the literature review and theoretical framework, chapter 3: research methodology and information collection including ethics and credibility, chapter 4: results and findings, chapter 5: analysis, discussions and interpretation of research information

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

This section reviews and critiques the key discussions and change management theories that have been developed by academics. The aim was to clarify the fundamental concepts and building blocks of organisational change. This study's interest of organisational change is not limited to structural changes in terms of design but the facilitation of an organisational culture that supports individuals as they make personal transitions within the context of technology and organisational processes. This includes and but is not limited to the change of business tools/processes within government departments, the change management processes followed to achieve the desired change and the holistic perceptions of mangers regarding the mentioned elements. To obtain a better understanding of this, an analysis of public sector dynamics, change mechanisms, critical perceptions of change was undertaken. Furthermore, the section critiques the use of a change management framework and its implementation guidelines within change management processes to guide the overall effectiveness and success of the organisational change. This study was grounded in the theory of Organisation Development that underpins change management.

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Change Management and Organisational Development

A theoretical framework establishes the basis for the study's theories to be accepted and validated (Okemba, 2018). It provides theoretical orientation, concepts, constructs, processes and relationship (Garvey & Jones, 2021). It forms the foundation and guides the researcher, ensuring that the final contribution adheres to the accepted theories to ensure academic integrity (Mensah, Frimpong, Acquah, Babah, & Dontoh, 2020). Organisational Development forms the foundation of theory upon which change management as a practice is established. The concepts, constructs, and processes outlined in this section assisted the researcher by providing a framework or basis for data analysis and interpretation of the meaning contained in the data collected.

Organisations are loosely described as groups of individuals cooperating in pursuit of mutual objectives. They are structured, dependent systems whose inputs and outputs/services are generated by and for an external environment (Odor, 2018). All organizations are part of the social system that lives in the midst of society Paramitha, Tobing, & Suroso, 2020). Change Management (CM) is broadly defined as “a purposeful, systematic approach to supporting individuals/teams/ organisations to arrive at a defined desired future state which involves changes to the work environment or to the work itself” (SA Board for People Practices, 2016: 2). Various definitions have been purported by authors seem to share the fundamental understanding and consensus that CM requires a holistic, systematic approach because at its core it aims to facilitate the transition of organizations and people from a current to a future state. From this viewpoint, 'change management' would seem to relate to 'managing' a 'state of transition’ within an organisation (van Nistelrooij, 2021). Change management is a function of Organisation Development (OD) and is sometimes referred to as Organisation Development and Change (ODC). The below extract provides a general overview of the mandate of the Organisation Development Directorate according to the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) (Motsei & Humbulani, n.d.):

> *“Organisational Development and design are concerned with the process of aligning the functional structure of a given department with its mandate, with the ultimate aim of improving its efficiency and effectiveness. Organisational design work can be triggered by the need to improve service delivery, to improve specific processes or as the result of a new or revised mandate. It involves, among other things:*
> - *Understanding the imperative for the impending changes and the working environment.*
> - *Reviewing the strategy or identifying the problem within a given department.*
> - *Evaluate whether structural change is necessary to address the challenges identified.*
> - *Building an understanding of which business processes the department would need to improve. Understanding the business processes, workflows, roles and responsibilities, volumes of work, activity analysis and resources.*
> - *Designing and testing new models and structures.*
> - *Assessing the capacity of Departments to function optimally.*
> - *Identify the Human Resource needs, in terms of personnel and skills needed to address the challenges identified.*
> - *Planning and managing the transition from the old structure to the new.”*

Based on the above and extensive literature review, this study deduced that OD is a field of research, theory, and practice that aims to facilitate more effective organisational change and performance by building the skills and knowledge of people (Butterfoss, Kegler, & Francisco, 2008). It entails a process of identifying problems, implementing solutions, and evaluating the results to enable organisations to solve problems and manage future change (Butterfoss et al., 2008). The history of ODC can be traced back to the 1930's from human relation studies however, the work of a social scientist, Kurt Lewin in the 1940's and 1950's, contributed substantially to contemporary theories of applied behavioural science (Butterfoss et al., 2008). Organisation Development is the theoretical framework that underpins change management and ensures that this study concentrates on the scope of relevant information. This was done by focusing on precise attributes and defining the specific approach that the researcher undertook in terms of gathering, analysing and interpreting the data.

The concept of change management emerged as a field of study in the 1980s under the wing of leading consulting firms that worked with Fortune 500 firms based on Lewis' work (van Nistelrooij, 2021). As a discipline, change management encompasses various aspects of change such as operational, structural or organisational changes which may be described as organisational activities and patterns designed to move it from a current state to a desired future state (Stouten et al., 2018). This may be a change in a one or more organisational domain such as organisational technology, structure, processes and human resources (Sofat, Kiran, & Kaushik, 2015). Sheikh Hamdo, (2021) adds that organisational change may be driven by both internal and external factors. Dynamics of change between private and public sector vary based on fundamental objectives, the interest of this study are those change dynamics that particularly affect the public sector. That said, ODC is necessitated by the socio-economic, population/constituency demands, political factors, business, technology, and environments, in which public organisations operate, that are increasingly complex and dynamic, forcing the organisation to constantly adapt to changes in the environment (Errida & Lotfi, 2021).

The role of OD in change management is facilitating an organisational culture that is adaptive to change. OD drives change and provides support for managers and the organisation as the process of change is undertaken. Burnes (2004) purports that change is inherent both at operational and strategic levels of organisational functioning. At all levels, change leaders must possess the skills to identify the need and timing for change and respond in ways that will facilitate change (Hayes, 2014). “Change management is not about forcing change but rather helping people prepare for the change (awareness), understanding the rationale and impact (knowledge), helping them with the tools that allow for skills development (adoption) and skills integration (commitment)” (Nelson, 2016). The goal of these organisational changes are numerous and vary significantly, however they are mainly driven by performance and service delivery improvement, prevention, elimination or management of organisational crisis (Odor, 2018). As a result, it is to the organisations advantage to invest significantly in various changes to adapt to the changing context (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). Many different schools of change management maintain that employees' reactions to change are not solely determined by the content of the change, but also determined by the process by which the change takes place (van der Voet et al., 2015).

OD as a theoretical framework provides an anchor for which change management processes and practices are founded. It is the engine that should drive development, transformation and change, whilst supporting employees within the organisation in order for the organisation to realise its goals. Existing literature is quiet on the critical role that that OD within the GPG plays in facilitating organisational change regarding the use of research to inform the development of business processes, innovation, recruitment (in line with industry and global standards and trends) and ensuring that all this is aligned and supported by policy. This study motivates through its literature and methodologies, the need for academic literature that will contribute to this knowledge gap. Change management models and policy, theories of change, are examples of change mechanisms or tools that can be used by OD within the GPG organisational context to facilitate effective change management.

More specific to the theoretical framework of OD, Lewin’s Kurt Lewin’s change management theory is the key anchor to this study as it crafts the relation between process model and change. Lewin's model was used from an ethnographic study to

investigate how change development is mediated, implemented, and led in complex organizations (Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain, & Ali, 2018). This is relevant to this study owing to the complex nature of government departments and their stringent bureaucratic nature. The Lewin's theory describes how leaders implement change processes by sharing their knowledge, and this sharing identifies the stages of change process, and these stages describe the functional significance of organizational change and implementation (Hussain et al., 2018). This reinforces the studies that postulate the critical role that leadership and management play in initiating, communicating and executing organisational change (Oreg & Berson, 2019, Yue, 2021).

A discussion of change management models follows which this study interpreted synonymously as processes and approaches to managing organisational change. This review of the models is intended to appreciate the existing theories that guide change management practices in organisations. To further provide fundamental understanding of the theory to enable an informed assessment of how the specific context of public organizations can influence change management implementation processes.

2.2 Change management models

Kogetsidis (2013) posits that implementing change initiatives without a holistic approach often fails. To mitigate change failure and decrease failure probability, authors have devised change management models to guide more successful processes. Executing the change requires the selection of the appropriate approach based on fitness of purpose. This study will undertake an analysis of four main change management models of prominence, outlining their theories, proposed processes, their weaknesses, how they build on from one another and respond to each other weaknesses. The purpose for this is to acknowledge the theories that are in existence in the field of change management available for sizeable organisations to use. Furthermore, to assist with understanding change processes, and the role of management in the change processes (Okemba, 2018). The four main change management models chosen were based on their relevance for large organisations,

fitness of purpose and their development toward the directive that the DPSA has adopted.

The DPSA's proposed model to South African public organisations/departments will be identified and a discussion of its properties will be uncovered in order to give perspective on why it was the theory of choice. It should be noted that change management models are aimed at improving organisational change success rates (Hicks, 2020; Odor, 2018). As a prerequisite for success, the correct approach needs to be selected for implementing the change (Okemba, 2018).

2.2.1 Kurt Lewin's change management model

Lewin's theory contends that before bringing about a change within an organisation, those affected by the change must be prepared for the change, motivated to change, and there must be an integrated system for bringing about the change in behaviour (Odor, 2018). He appreciated that change at all levels, whether it be individual or group change, was a profound psychological process (Burnes, 2004). This model apportions the change process into three steps namely, 1) unfreeze, 2) change, 3) refreeze (Lewin, 1947). This model can be used as a planning strategy to support individuals and teams before implementing a change.

Step 1) Unfreezing – encompasses identifying the need for a change and development (Odor, 2018). At this stage, it is critical to identify the driving force and the restraining force of the change, which are referred to as the benefits and costs of the change implementation (Odor, 2018). It requires that managers educate and motivate their teams to obtain buy in on the concept of change (Connelly, 2020). He claimed that in order to successfully change behaviour, it is necessary to unfreeze the equilibrium, that is unlearn old behaviour (Burnes, 2004). It is critical to undertake this step to have a justified reason for change so that it drives the entire change process, even when hurdles in the process are encountered.

Step 2) Change – the implementation of change, the action, the transition into the desired position. The change process must undergo continuous education, extensive support of the staff, and undiluted communication between the manager and team regarding the benefits of the change (Odor, 2018). 3) Refreeze - the aim, at this stage,

is to stabilize the team near a new quasi-stationary equilibrium in order to prevent regression of the new behaviours/state (Burnes, 2004).

Lewin's change theory gained wide application in the field of ODC but was later criticized for its discontinuous and seemingly simplistic nature, especially in regards to the 'refreezing' of changes (van Nistelrooij, 2021). The model assumes that organisations operate in stable, peaceful environments (Odor, 2018). These criticisms are understandable since Lewin's initial conceptualisation of change dates back to the early 1940s; since then, not only have we become accustomed to rapid changes and free-flowing information, but we have also been forced to cope with an increasing amount of complexity in a time when decisions are being made at a faster pace, businesses are scaling up, and we accept new, challenging technological and social innovations (van Nistelrooij, 2021). The field has not so much necessarily rejected this approach but added more explicit layers within the broad framework, this will be demonstrated through the below model.

2.2.2 Kotter's 8 change management theory

This theory concentrates on the individuals implicated in change process and their psychology (Hicks, 2020). Developed by John Kotter, a Harvard professor, whose insight is essentially that when there is a clear vision for the change process, there will be less error. Errors will decrease, and success will increase (Odor, 2018). This is the model proposed in the Change Management NMOG Guide by the DPSA to South African public organisations/departments. This study will interrogate if departments use this guide in change management processes on the ground and its appropriateness for the GPG context.

The DPSA interpretation of the theory (as adapted from Kotter, 1995) proposes the following; 1) Motivating individuals through a sense of urgency, 2) Recruiting change agents and leaders with different skills and departments to form a change task team, 3) Clearly defining the strategic vision that is desired to be achieved, 4) Establishing clear and effective communication with all personnel involved in the change management process to obtain buy-in and to ensure that all players are clear on their roles and responsibilities, 5) Honest identification and addressing of challenges, 6)

Establishing short-term goals to simplify the change management plan into achievable steps, 7) Ensuring the maintenance of momentum throughout the implementation phase, 8) The changes should be maintained after the initial project is completed.

The analysis below attempts to provide perspective that demonstrates that the field has not so much necessarily rejected Lewin's approach but added more explicit layers within the broad framework. This is based on the benefit of understanding behavioural changes from diverse perspectives such as groups, organizational, societal change and the underlying motives that must be strengthened in the process of initiating and implementing change (Okemba, 2018). The figure below depicts that the first three steps (1, 2 and 3) seek to create an enabling environment for change (Odor, 2018). This can be analysed as the "unfreezing" stage of Lewin's model. Steps four to six (4-6) are concerned with ensuring that all members of the organization are actively involved in the process of change (Odor, 2018). These steps could be analysed as the "change" step of Lewin's model. Steps seven and eight (7 and 8) are all about ensuring the change's long-term stability and sustainability (Odor, 2018). Finally, these steps could be interpreted as the "refreezing" stage of Lewin's model. Despite these processes developing 50 years apart, Lewin (1947) laid the groundwork for Kotter's (1995) multistep prescriptive process (Grant, 2016). Lewin's theory mapped out elements of the change process, whilst Kotter gave meaning to the theory by applying practical value (Grant, 2016). This perspective allows us to see Kotter as the more developed version of the Lewin's theory, in that he noted that change must be a holistic process that addresses the relationship between multiple social groups (Lewin, 1947). Kotter's model depicts the governments' proposed approach on how change leadership should be executed.



Figure 1: Kotter's 8 Step Change Model (Odor, 2018)

At face value, the most notable weaknesses with Kotter's model is that appears too mechanistic, there is an overemphasis of sequence of linear steps (Hughes, 2016; Odor, 2018). This analysis is supported by Kotter's warning that "skipping even a single step or getting too far ahead without a solid base almost always creates problems" Kotter (1996: 23). Additionally, the model is silent on the metrics or evaluation of success of the change undertaken. In response to this weakness, the following model provides a more holistic approach to organisational change, that is less mechanical, more fluid and provides metrics for evaluation.

2.2.3 The McKinsey 7-S model

This model was introduced in the late 1970's by two former McKinsey consultants, Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman (AGS, nd). Popularly used as a strategic planning tool (Salvari & Dogu, 2018), this model entails dividing the organisational change program into seven components namely, 1) Change **S**trategy, 2) **S**tructure of the organisation, 3) Business **S**ystems and processes, 4) **S**hared company values and culture (organisational culture), 5) **S**tyle or manner of the work, 6) **S**taff involvement, 7) workforce **S**kills (Hicks, 2020). Components one to three; strategy, structure and systems, are classified as the hard elements. The remaining components: style, shared value, staff involvement/HR and skills, are considered soft elements. The soft elements are generally influenced by company culture and the hard ones by management culture (Kocaoğlu & Demir, 2019)



Figure 2: The McKinsey 7-S Model (Kocaoğlu & Demir, 2019)

This model is a powerful tool that helps identify areas within an organisation that are not working as they should. It offers a unique perspective into seven major areas that other change models do not explore as comprehensively as it does. The trick with the McKinsey 7-S model, however, is that there is no specific order to address each aspect. Discretion is left to managers, as long as they ensure that they address all aspects at some point in the change process. The value of this model is that it provides key indicators for monitoring and evaluating the success of change processes, projects, programmes.

This model is not suitable as a step-by-step strategy for change management, rather a strategic management tool to monitor if the engine/organisation is a well-oiled machine (AGS, nd). Furthermore, a review of literature has indicated that there does not seem to be an appropriate scale for measuring implementation of the 7S framework (Kocaoğlu & Demir, 2019). Sheikh Hamdo, (2021) argues that although the McKinsey model provides a more holistic approach to organisational change, it does not offer a clear map of how to handle change. Resistance to change has most frequently been cited as one of the contributors to change failure. This can be associated with the uncertainty that change presents. The following model presents a response to this weakness of change.

2.2.4 ADKAR change management model

Developed by Jeffrey Hiatt, Prosci's founder, following an analysis of more than 700 companies that undertook large change initiatives (Malhotra, 2019; Paramitha et al.,

2020). The ADKAR Model is also known as the Prosci change management model that focuses on limiting resistance to organisational change (Malhotra, 2019). Hiatt emphasizes that organisational change requires first that individuals change. The model is premised on five change management goals which are: 1) Awareness, 2) Desire, 3) Knowledge, 4) Ability, 5) Reinforcement (Hiatt, 2006).

A description of each of the goals/steps in the model, follows: Step 1) Awareness entails educating employees about the planned changes that will unfold and its purpose. Step 2) Desire encompasses inspiring and building enthusiasm regarding the change. Step 3) Knowledge requires the provision of information to every individual involved in the change on their role and responsibilities towards realising the change. Step 4) Ability necessitates ensuring that employees are equipped with the necessary training, skills and resources to perform the duties allocated in step 3. It also speaks to the ability and agility of an organisation undergoes changes. Step 5) Reinforcement, remaining in touch with employees and stakeholders to ensure they are keeping up with the 'new normal' after the change has been accomplished (Hicks, 2020; Paramitha et al., 2020). The value of this model is that it too provides key indicators for monitoring and evaluating the success of change processes, projects, programmes.

Some weaknesses of the ADKAR model are the false sense of confidence it creates that a minor training course can replicate years of actual transformation and simply replace habitual operations (Kimberling, 2021). An additional difficulty with this model is that it focuses on the actions and behaviour of the change program before the end results are defined. The ADKAR model puts focus primarily on the human aspect of change, it is therefore better suited for project teams and environments rather than large organizations with complex processes (Galli, 2018).

2.2.5 Model comparisons

Each model explains how to implement change management, which is to start from an initial state, identify where a change is needed, enter a transition phase, implement the change, and then reach a desired state (Galli, 2018).

Almost all change management models recognize the importance of human resources in the change management process, though some focus more on this side than others (Sheikh Hamdo, 2021). The ADKAR model provided the most emphasis on team members and employees, in contrast Lewin's and Kotter's models were the most limited in terms of the implications for people. In some models, the focus shifted from the people dimension to the process of implementing change (Galli, 2018).

The Kotter and McKinsey models offer extensive guidelines on how to initiate, manage and sustain change which managers can use as practical tools to form the basis of a change management strategy (Galli, 2018). These two models appear to be the most suitable for managers seeking to undertake large scale change, which is often the case in the public sector due to the dynamics of this sector. To its detriment, the ADKAR model is not suitable to large scale implementations.

A successful and sustainable CM model begins with a foundation of change and is linked to a successful and sustainable implementation (Holloway, 2015). Regardless of the chosen model, it seems that strategy, communication and acceptance appear to be the most crucial elements of a change management process (Galli, 2018).

This review of the models was intended to appreciate the existing theories that guide change management practices in organisations. This research has attempted to illustrate the development of the models, showing a link between one another, and almost building from one another. The following logic was applied; that the models do not have to be mutually exclusive, that they may be seen to be responding to each other’s weaknesses. Additionally, to provide fundamental understanding of the theory to enable an informed assessment of how the specific context of public organizations can influence change management implementation processes.

The models reviewed in this study are merely guides intended to assist organisations to navigate the changes driven by internal or external factors. There are various considerations to be taken into account when managers choose and eventually implement the most suitable change management model for an organisation, in this case a GPG department. These considerations are but are not limited to the size of the organisation, the context and the reason for the change, the nature of proposed

change, the timeline of the change, and the resources (human, financial, & etc) available to undertake the change.

Several studies have suggested that public sector organizations have specific characteristics that differ from those of the private sector in terms of implementing change (Macleod, & By, 2009; McNulty and Ferlie 2004; van der Voet et al., 2015). The next section will discuss public sector dynamics and provide perspective on change management in the public sector context, as a contribution to the knowledge gap.

2.3 Public Sector Dynamics

Prior studies have examined the success and outcomes of planned organizational change in public and private organizations (Golembiewski, Proehl, and Sink 1981; Park 1991; Robertson and Seneviratne 1995; van der Voet et al., 2015). However, it seems that many of these studies neglect to consider how the specific context of public organizations can influence change implementation processes (e.g. Isett et al. 2013; Chustz and Larson 2006; van der Voet et al., 2015). As a consequence, recent studies have pointed out the need to examine how specific characteristics of public organizations affect implementation processes (e.g. Kickert 2014; van der Voet 2014; McNulty and Ferlie 2004; van der Voet et al., 2015). It is such studies that motivate the need for this study, that explores change management having regard to the specific characteristics of Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) departments as a contribution to academic knowledge gap.

The South African public sector suffers from a decline in quality due to deliberate measures such as state capture, cadre deployment & employments, and constraints such as fiscal consolidation, inefficient resource usage, and poor prioritisation (PSC, 2021). Repurposing a country's institutions for the benefit of private interests is called state capture (PSC, 2021). Cadre deployment is the appointment of party-political loyalists to institutions and bodies, whether independent or otherwise, by the government, at the behest of the governing party, to circumvent public reporting lines and take the institution under party control rather than the State (Swanepoel, 2021). Cadre employment is described as individuals, companies, and agencies benefitting

from government patronage not on merit, but because they have some or other connection (i.e., party-political connection, nepotism, favouritism) to the governing party or state officials (Swanepoel, 2021). The effects of state capture are that the country is collapsing internally and externally under the current administration (Martin & Solomon, 2016). The unemployment rate was recorded at 32,9% in Q3 of 2022, the economy is floundering, state owned enterprises such as ESKOM and Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) are collapsing and in a state of disrepute amongst a myriad of problems.

The GPG's are unfortunately also tainted by state capture, the department of e-Government spent R900 000.00, whilst the Gauteng Department of Education spent R12 895 852.00 on a contract with one of the companies, Bosasa, now known as African Global Operations, implicated in the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture Report (Zondo, 2022). In 2020, during the peak of the covid 19 pandemic dispensation, fourteen (14) service providers were irregularly appointed, and contracted up to R430 million in three months to allegedly decontaminate schools during the holidays (Ndlovu, 2021). Funds from other departmental projects had to be shifted to ensure that provision could be made to manage the department's response to the covid 19 pandemic. This means that some internal projects had to be put on hold or compromised. The mismanagement of state funds in this nature is part of the damning effects of state capture which contributed largely to slow paced change, budgetary and managerial capacity constraints with regard to change implementation in the public sector loosely speaking. There is a need to acknowledge these forces, but also that in many spaces in the public sector, typical processes like change management continued and this is the focus of this study. The recovery from the effects of state capture necessitates a lot of change processes such as amending some legislation, principles and current systems that enabled it to transpire.

Public institutions are dynamic entities, and their survival and success are determined by how they respond to the forces of change and public needs (Roux, 2002). Melchor (2008) posits that changing the public sector is not an easy task. To achieve the goals and objectives of public institutions, one would have to analyse current strategies and operations, propose and roll out alternatives as well as streamline current standards (Swanepoel et al, 2000).

> *...the Government is aware that there are a number of broad models of public management and change that might be followed and adapted to the South African situation. These range from traditional bureaucratic models to neo-liberal models of public choice, based on the restructuring and contracting-out of state services. Although lessons can be learned from all such models, the Government believes that the process of administrative transformation and reform in South Africa can best be informed by a different model or approach, known usually as the Strategic Change Management Approach. By focusing in particular on the need for new forms of managerial leadership, the devolution of decision-making power, the democratisation of internal work procedures, and the incorporation of civil society bodies into the governance process, this approach has obvious relevance to the vision and mission for the new public service and the specific needs of the transformation process in South Africa.* (DPSA, 1995)

South African government departments are characterised by special public interests, labour unions, a lack of competition, a bureaucratic landscape in which professional officials report to political principals in issues of policy and strategic decision-making processes. Within these national and institutional contexts, hierarchical governance continues to play a significant role (Katsamunska, 2016). In bureaucracy, there are various components, such as complex organization, division of labour, permanence, professional management, hierarchical control, and chain of command (Rockman, 2022). South African government departments, within national, provincial and local government, are organised into directorates, business units or division intended to avoid duplication of work within the organisation and facilitate service delivery (Mamogale, 2016).

The Public Service Act, 1994 stipulates that department use the following standardised designation for management ranks: a) Head of Department – the departmental accounting officer, b) the branch head, Deputy Director General, c) a Chief Directorate headed by a Chief Director, d) Directorate which is headed by a Director who oversees various sub-directorates that are managed by e) Deputy Directors (middle management) who support and perform oversight and monitoring over and units that are headed by f) Assistant Directors (lower management). This hierarchy of authority provides a clear separation of responsibilities and functions which inadvertently

contributes to silo operations within organisations and government in general. The nature of the bureaucratic system in which Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) departments are founded in, is one of interdependence. The respective GPGs all have organisational structures within which officials perform their duties in a value chain that requires some form of work to be performed by more than one official, often involving more than one directorate, unit or office. One could view it as one machine with different parts that perform varied tasks to keep the machine operating. However, the greatest challenge within GPG departments and the GPG as a whole, is silo operations. Silo operations are a unit, directorate, or department that functions independently of others, especially in a manner seen as preventing communication and cooperation (Merriam -Webster, 2022). Individuals, units, directorates, offices, fail to see the bigger picture within which they operate daily. Each unit is merely concerned with the output or deliverables expected from them without a greater understanding of how and what they do feeds into the bigger picture, the machine. Employees identified departmental silos as the main reason for the department's inability to deliver (Malatji & Montana, 2021).

The challenge with silo operations is a subtle duplication of functions, the failure to collaborate based on expertise which robs the organisation of opportunities to extend resources, capacity, reach, and synergy. It contributes to inability of officials to locate themselves within the greater scheme of the organisational big picture. It results in inefficient use of organisational resources, whether financial, human or otherwise. It contributes to the concern raised by one of the HOD’s that officials do not know how the government works. In reality, the ideal bureaucratic organization is frequently imperfect, amongst various challenges, this model of bureaucratic governance often accounts for the delays in responses and change ultimately experienced by stakeholders. The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) is no exception to the premise.

2.4 The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG)

Known as South Africa’s economic heartland, the Gauteng Province has a strong economy. The Gauteng Province continues to account for the largest share of South Africa's population at approximately 16.10 million people, that is 26.6% (Stats SA, 2022). Being considered as one of the provincial leaders regarding steering change

and innovation for its residents. The GPG is often faced with the need to undergo change, whether in response to new challenges or priorities, or simply as part of the expansion and restructuring process (Chemjor, 2015). Whilst there has been a notable change between the apartheid era and now, there are also lots of real and perceived ways that change is stagnating in provincial department organisational environments. This study recognises that to undertake any change, it is crucial to identify and understand the reason to change and why it must occur.

The focus of this study was on the Gauteng Provincial Government as it was most feasible to undertake an examination of this nature due to accessibility, distance, and access to information. Additionally, the GDE had been undergoing structural changes which the researcher was privy to, for the purpose of learning and examination. Lastly the e-Gov was established to pioneer Gauteng in the 4th industrial revolutionary space, which encourages and enables an atmosphere of organisational changes on the technological front.

2.5 Case Studies:

2.5.1 The Gauteng Department of Education

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), as amended, the Gauteng Department of Education is mandated to provide compulsory basic education for all learners in the province, progressively. The National Minister of Basic Education has overall political and legislative responsibility for basic education (grades R - 12) portfolio while provincial governments are responsible for school education, including determining the share of national revenue each province receives for education (Gauteng Department of Education, n.d.). Provinces have identified Education Districts and Gauteng has established fifteen (15) District Offices bringing the support to schools closer and improving service delivery. In terms of original powers and functions, Education Districts do not have any statutory authority (Gauteng Department of Education, n.d.). However, they work within the policy and legislative framework created by the National Department of Education and the respective Provincial Department of Education, as well as delegations from the provincial departments. The Gauteng Department of Education currently employs ninety one thousand nine hundred and eighty one (91 981) individuals (63 863 females and

28 118 males) between schools and Head Office (A. Wahed, personal communication, April 2022).

Within the GDE, the function of change management is that of the Organisation Development Directorate, which is under the leadership of the Strategic Human Resources Management Chief Directorate. These are managed by the Branch Corporate Management Branch which ensures efficient corporate administration and management of the GDE. The Branch Corporate Management reports to the Head of Department who reports to the Member of Executive Council (MEC). The figure below provides a high-level overview of the GDE organisational structure (GDE, 2022).

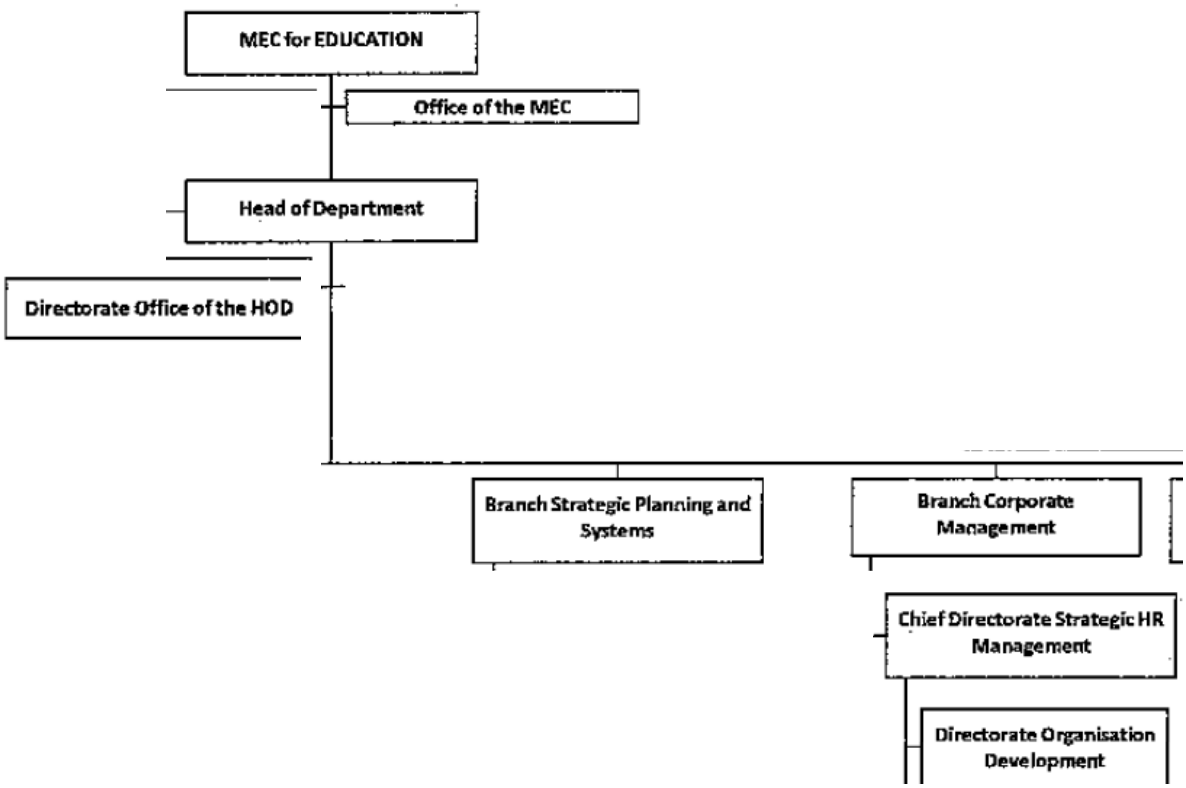


Figure 3: GDE Organisational Structure (GDE Organogram, 2022)

2.5.2 The Gauteng Department of e-Government

The key role of the Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov) is the implementation of an infrastructure to connect government facilities, including schools, hospitals, offices, and economic zones. Through the implementation of transformative technologies from the fourth industrial revolution, the e-Gov is assigned to modernise government services and foster innovation ecosystems that inspire sustainable economic growth (Gauteng Provincial Government, n.d.). In line with the province's

Transform, Modernization and Re-industrialization (TMR) agenda, the Department of E-Government was mandated to digitize all government services up to the level of local government and to provide high speed broadband access to administrative buildings, schools, health facilities, social development facilities, community service centers (Thusong), eKasi labs, and enterprise hubs (Gauteng Provincial Government, n.d.).

The Gauteng Department of e-Government was officially proclaimed on the 11 August 2015 and currently employs eight hundred and thirteen (813) individuals comprised of 441 females and 372 males. (A. Wahed, personal communication, April 2022). Through these officials the department strives to provide an enabling platform and support service; enable GCR entities to deliver e-Government services; establish an e-Government governance structure to drive priorities, standards, and regulations; promote the use of e-Government services; and enhance public and private partnerships for e-Government development (Gauteng Provincial Government, n.d.).

The below figure represents a high-level organisational structure for the Gauteng Department of e-government as published in the 2021/22 Annual report. The e-Gov has what is termed as an interim structure, which the researcher was not able to access and this will be expanded further on in the findings and discussions chapter of this report.

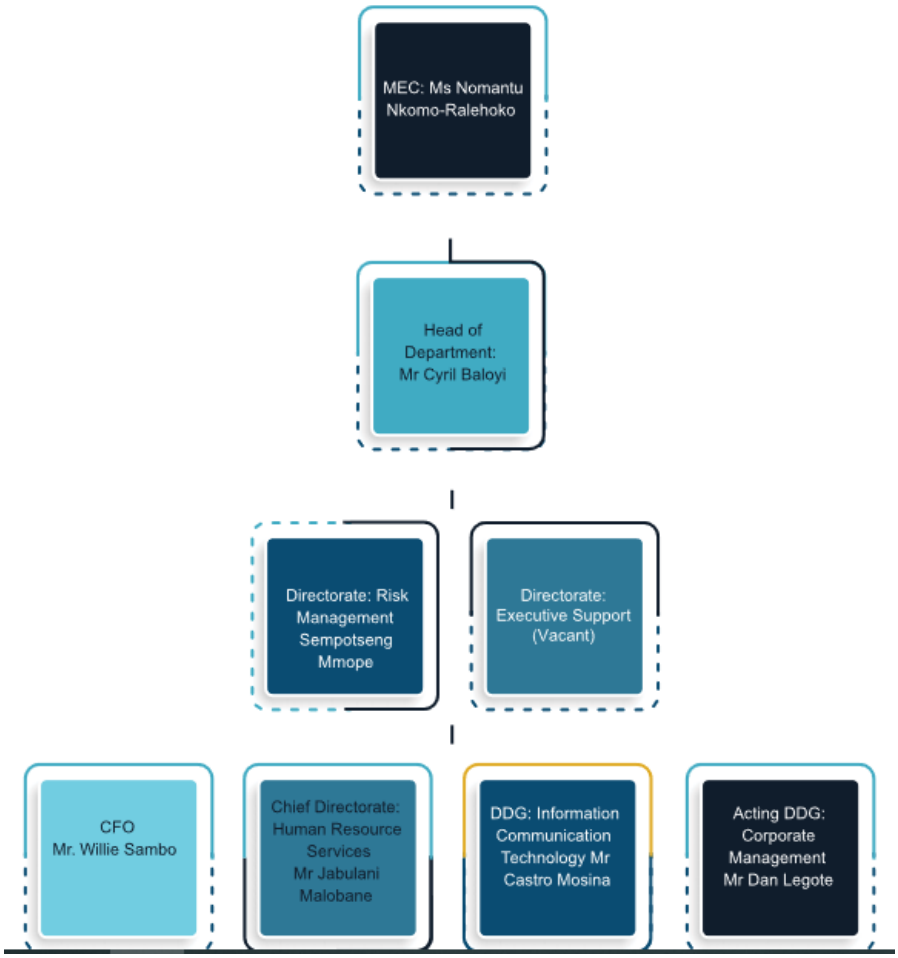


Figure 4: e-Gov Organisational Structure

Albeit that these two organisations are both Gauteng Provincial Government departments, this study notes that there are significant differences regarding the sizes and length of existence of the respective departments. This may have an influence on change management processes which is addressed in the findings and discussions chapter of this report.

2.6 Triggers for organisational design change in the GPG

(As adapted from the Directive on Changes to the Organisational Structures by Departments DPSA, 2016)

There are variations in the scope and complexity of organisational review and redesign processes, and the consideration of the impact on employees is crucial. To limit continuous review and changes that may impact affect implementation of programmes or the functioning of the departments, it is proposed that changes to the organisational structure of the departments be limited to the following conditions, as informed by principles as outlined in the Public Service Regulations:

Structuring based on amended mandate or change to the strategic focus: informed by 3–5-year strategic review processes. Organizations are often forced to change their strategies when the environment around them changes, which requires departments to assess the internal and/or external environment, organisational capacity, and current business processes to determine if the organization is well positioned to support a new strategy. In In the public service, departmental strategies are mostly determined by the department's statutory and parliamentary mandate.

The splitting of a department, the transfer of function(s) between departments, the establishment, merger and/ or abolishment of the departments: this may be determined by the president or the relevant premier.

Organisational structuring based on a macro-organisation of the public: this may be determined by the president.

Upon adverse outcomes of an organisational functionality assessment (OFA) and an improvement process for organisational performance: this is commonly required in instances where strategies and policies are not/poorly implemented. In this case, a high-level diagnosis needs to be performed to inform the rationale for such.

Among the other proposed changes, abolishing posts or functions, redesigning posts or functions, or moving posts or functions affect functional configuration and staff establishment. A high-level diagnosis needs to be performed to inform the rationale for such including the scale of the exercise which will inform the organisational review and redesign processes to be followed by departments, in line with the requirements of the Public Service Act (PSA) and Public Service Regulations (PSR). The steps to be followed should be guided by phases, decision points, and review points, in line with the DPSA Guide and toolkit.

The covid 19 pandemic and its thrust into 4ir: the world was faced with an unusual and unprecedented situation of immense scientific uncertainty around a disease that nobody understood (Presidency of South Africa, 2021). The president of the Republic proclaimed a national lockdown for the country as a precautionary measure which greatly impacted service delivery and the economy as a whole. To coordinate the national response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Cabinet established new

structures such as the the National Coronavirus Command Council, National Disaster Management Centre and the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NatJoints) and provincial steering committees (Presidency of South Africa, 2021). Government departments responded by providing some of their employees with laptops and 3g sims to enable them to be accessible for decision making, to convene and attend meetings virtually, respond to emails and for service delivery to continue. The assumption was that computer literacy amongst officials was high and that this would facilitate remote working and support the continuity of the business of the government, which is essentially service delivery (Gauteng Province, 2021).

This was not without its challenges, in terms of communication, government adopted a top-down, militaristic approach, including the use of labels like ‘command centre’ and ‘war room’ (Gauteng Province, 2021). Not all employees were responsive, not all employees were given these devices which caused some uncertainty, delayed the reception of communication and sometimes distorted the messages received by the lower levels of government employees. Ordinary people experienced negative signals because of this, and many of them encountered security officials who were antagonistic (Gauteng Province, 2021). It became evident that mediating fake news only on social media and word of mouth (as did the Office of the Premier in Gauteng) was inadequate, and little was done to combat fake news on these platforms (Gauteng Province, 2021).

This study’s perspective of organisational change is not limited to structural changes in terms of design but the facilitation of an organisational culture that supports individuals as they make personal transitions within the context of technology and organisational processes. According to Balogun and Hailey (2004) approximately seventy percent of all change programmes undertaken in most organisations around the world fail (Glensor, 2010: 2). In the South African public sector context, this can be attributed to various factors such as state capture, resource and capacity constraints, resistance to change, poor communication and comprehension of change and its outcomes, the absence of change management frameworks that are intended to inform, guide and facilitate change. In a government department, there are many stakeholders, often times resulting in communication difficulties, distortions in information transfer, and contrasting perceptions of change goals, methods, and

results (Panenkov, Lukmanova, Kuzovleva, & Bredikhin, 2021). It is primarily change management that determines the success or failure of change initiatives (Melchor, 2008). Change implementation failures can prove quite expensive, it is therefore imperative that those responsible for change get it right (Hayes, 2014). However, getting it right is not easy. There are often major challenges facing change agents, whether they are managers or consultants, as they fail to recognise certain key dynamics that influence outcomes and therefore do not always respond in ways that allow them to exert sufficient control over the unfolding of change processes (Hayes, 2014). An example of this can be seen with a few failed and slow progressing attempts at modernising or digitizing GPGs, such the implementation of the Employee Self Service (ESS). Powered by e-Gov, ESS is a GPG initiative that aims to streamline services such as leave application and approval, provide online management facilities to empower employees by providing simple services, quicker response times, to enhance employee time management and increase efficiency. Since its launch in 2018, five (5) years later, there are a sizeable number of employees that complete hard copies of leave forms. This is due to flawed change management processes, employee resistance to change, resource and capacity constraints, system and server rights challenges, and subjective technical support. This renders ESS useless to those employees and managers. It is incumbent on the reader to deduce whether this is a failure or slow progress. However, this example is indicative of the significance of change management processes and motivates studies such as these that attempt to understand the approaches in place and understand where the gap is that contributes to change implementation challenges such as this.

The following are specific benefits of change management as adapted from (Nelson, 2016): assists with bringing unity of purpose to the change process and vision for the future organization, determining how change will be managed through clearly defined decision-making authority/governance, identifying and understanding the impact of the change on various stakeholders (both positively and negatively), ensuring that the change management plan and strategy are defensible and effective. Assist in developing and supporting change leaders most suited to deliver the program successfully. Establishing a change network, creating communications that move people along the commitment curve, and conducting stakeholder analysis. Identifying competency strengths, aligning talent management, developing training strategies and

performance processes in the direction of change to enable and support operational change, coordinating the transition from old to new processes by reconfiguring the organization structure in line with the changes. Creating a behaviour change plan that reflects the organization's core values and cultural characteristics. Implementing change management interventions, developing change metrics and tracking the value chain and linking them to the organization's business goals. Establishing business readiness criteria and checklists, and facilitating seamless transitions (Nelson, 2016). This brings us to our following section on change mechanisms.

2.7 Change mechanisms

There does not seem to be a consensus on the definition of change mechanisms largely owing to the different aspects of change investigated in different disciplines and fields of research. Kazdin, (2007) posits that change mechanisms are theory-driven reasons that change occurs in a given setting or context that explain “how” change occurred. Additionally, a common understanding is that they are processes involved in an action, reaction, or other natural phenomenon. “Mechanisms of change are defined as the processes by which evidence use might be achieved within a given strategy or activity” (Goldman, Pabari, Langer, & Weyrauch, 2021). This research supports the view shared by authors that change mechanisms do not fit neatly or correspond to set scientific explanations but have their own direct logic (Hempel 1970; Martin, Weisenfeld, & Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, 2009).

This research recognises that change mechanisms are the processes or the methodology involved in change processes. So, whenever a result is transformed by given causal forces, it is reasonable to examine the mechanisms underlying the change in that result (Martin et al., 2009). In examining these mechanisms, one would be seeking explanations for the change. This opens up opportunity for interdisciplinary approaches that may improve the planning, understanding, implementation and success of change management processes, such as the incorporation of theory of change as a change mechanism.

2.7.1 Theory of change

Historically, theories of change emerged from theory-driven evaluation, which gained prominence in the 1990's (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). Theories of change are

innovative tools for designing and evaluating social change initiatives (Morra Imas & Rist, 2009). They require that we clearly define inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. *Inputs* are what will be used to undertake the task, *activities* are the actions that need to be undertaken, *outputs* are the product of the combination of inputs and activities, *outcomes* are the goals that we intend to achieve, and *impact* is an analysis of casual effect of a program on an outcome of a change programme or project (DPME, 2019; Gertler, Martinez, Premand, Rawlings, & Vermeersch, 2010; Morra Imas & Rist, 2009). They enable a researcher a better understanding of what is being implemented, how it is being implemented and why. Theory of change serves as a tool for clarifying underlying assumptions from the beginning of a change project (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

Based on the above brief outline of the theory of change can be used as an analytical tool, subject to purpose. It could also be a suitable as a change mechanism, that is as a theory-driven model that provides reasons that change occurs that explains “how” change occurred. This aligns with the assertion of Kazdin, 2007, that change mechanisms are theory-driven reasons that change occurs in a given setting or context that explain “how” change occurred. There is evidence in literature of the use of ‘theory of change’ as a change mechanism within various fields not excluding the change management discipline (Mayne, 2015; Stein, 2019). Drawn from the evaluation field, the theory of change is a planning and process tool, that provides a framework for testing hypotheses and assumptions about what actions will achieve the desired results (Taplin, Clark, Collins, & Colby, 2013). Panenkov et al., (2021) posit that they consider it possible and expedient to manage digitalization processes through digital transformation using the theory of change methodology. Al-Alawi, Abdulmohsen, Al-Malki, & Mehrotra, (2018) further add that theories of change are powerful mechanisms that have the potential to minimize anxieties related unknown future results.

The table below provides a distinction between change theory, a change mechanism and theory of change, based on definition, scope, source and applicability.

Table 1:Distinction between change theory, change mechanism and theory of change

Terminology	Definition	Scope	Source
Change theory,	Framework of ideas, supported by evidence, that explains some aspect of change beyond a single initiative	Generalizable beyond a single initiative	Peer-reviewed literature and books relevant to organisational development and change
Theory of change	A particular approach for making underlying assumptions in a change project explicit, and using the desired outcomes of the project as a mechanism to guide project planning, implementation, and evaluation	Single change initiative	Created and refined by project team
Change mechanisms	theory-driven reasons that change occurs in a given setting or context that explain "how" change occurred	Generalizable beyond a single initiative	Peer-reviewed literature and books relevant to different disciplines and fields of research can be refined by project team

Table 1: As adapted from (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020)

Methodologies such as theory of change are used in companies, philanthropy, non-profit organisations, international development, research, and government sectors to promote social change. A theory of change may be used to form a framework for supporting the change initiatives in a change management policy or strategy that would further assist with evaluating the status and progress of change (McDonald, 2015). The following section will discuss how policy and its implementation guidelines provides as a change mechanism. This is to investigate the alignment of Goldman et al. assertion that change mechanisms are processes by which evidence use might be achieved within a given strategy (in this case a policy or framework) or activity" (Goldman et al., 2021).

2.8 Change Management Policy and Implementation Guidelines

Burnes (2004) posits that poor success rate of change implementation indicates a fundamental lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organisational change, further, what is currently available to academics and practitioners is a wide range of contradictory and confusing theories and approaches (Burnes, 2004). Government departments are typified by a tendency to be slow to adapt to change with poor change management success rates. It is the assumption of this study that this could be due to the absence of change management policies and implementation guidelines within provincial government departments. This assumption will be explored, and findings will be discussed at a later stage.

Policies are strategies, intended courses of action created in response to perceived issues (Cochran & Malone, 2014). A change strategy can be thought of as a complex approach to revamping beliefs, attitudes, values, and structures of government departments to better adapt to emerging technologies, markets, and challenges (Roux, 2002). A change management policy would therefore provide a framework on the administration of change management processes. It would further provide the opportunity for institutions of government to review their human resources, plan the communication process and put systems and processes in place that ensure continuity of information flow.

Implementation guidelines are drawn to provide technical guidance on undertaking and managing the implementation of the change management policy (Mathe, 2014). Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the policy as they are informed by the policy. They provide definitions, descriptions, outline methodologies, address key questions, and issues for consideration when managing the implementation of change processes (Mathe, 2014). For a more practical example of application, see (Motsei & Humbulani, n.d. and South African Government, 2022) on providing guidelines to Organisational Design Practitioners on the creation of Units and Post based on the Guide and toolkit on organisational design.

The ability to formulate effective policies for change and implementation guidelines on a continuous basis also evaluate or analyse such policy initiatives, is of paramount importance if government departments are to survive, grow productively, and provide quality services to the public (Roux, 2002). It is important to highlight that a change

management policy and its implementation guidelines would support and guide this process to ensure that it is within necessary prescripts that will ensure that no harm is done to the organisation and its stakeholders. This study is of the view that a combination of the use of theory of change, change management policy and implementation guidelines may serve as examples of change mechanisms, in that they outline processes by which evidence use might be achieved within the given change strategy.

An argument exists on the proliferation of policies with no clear rationale, where policy is treated as outputs without consideration of their impact on the organization's priorities or any follow-up on implementation (DPME, 2019). Furthermore, there is an abundance of literature that describe the perceptions of authors regarding an array of aspects and examples of policy failure. The concept of “policy failure” has gained traction over the years coupled with the perception that there is no need for good policy in South Africa but rather the implementation of existing policies and academic models that exist (Volker, 2014; Hudson, Hunter, & Peckham, 2019; Francis & Webster, 2019; Beach & Smeets, 2022). As a result, government should be taking an interest in how policies can be largely strengthened and supported, rather than just letting them drift into full or partial failure (Hudson et al., 2019). The absence of a change management policy creates a gap in the ownership and accountability of change management. This is supported by Burnes’ argument that the poor success rate of change implementation indicates a fundamental lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organisational change, further, what is currently available to academics and practitioners is a wide range of contradictory and confusing theories and approaches (Burnes, 2004).

2.9 Critical perceptions of change

Some researchers examine change and develop process theories, while others study change's nature and develop content theories. Regardless of the perspective, most of the change management and organisation development (OD) literature is shaped by those who are seeking to understand how organizations or organisational behaviour (whether micro or macro) may be improved (Dibella, 2007). The same change (organisational or structural) may be perceived and appreciated differently by different individuals within an organisation. As change is filtered through participants'

preferences, and thus appreciated and accepted, or resisted accordingly (Dibella, 2007). This study seeks to explore how managers in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments perceive and experience these change management approaches. As it recognises that managing participant perceptions is an integral part of managing change (Dibella, 2007).

The study of critical perceptions prompts critical thinking about various change management dynamics brought to the fore by academics, practitioners and managers. This critical thinking reinforces problem-solving ability of academics and managers. It assists by questioning the status quo and finding different and sometimes better ways of approaching the problems that arise during the change processes with the goal of improving approaches to organisational change. Critically thinking about the critical perceptions of change affords this study deeper understanding dynamics at play within change management such as attitudes, approaches, context, processes and tools, thus contributing to knowledge gaps.

An attitude which is commonly associated with change is referred to as resistance. Change-resistant managers do not want to take risks; rather, they prefer to allow the organisation to operate as it currently is (Saul, 2009). For a change process to be effectively implemented, managers' attitudes towards the process are crucial. Therefore, (Dibella, 2007) argues that what is most important to change managers is how key stakeholders and those with influence view the change, rather than some mean score of its desirability among all participants. A significant amount of literature suggests that strategic organisational change entails ongoing initiatives that are directed from the top to the bottom of an organization and has a profound effect on the depth and pace of change efforts (Buss and Kuyvenhoven, 2011; Rouleau and Balogun, 2011). This necessitates an understanding into the significance of managers perceptions of change with respect to realizing change outcomes. This is supported by prior literature that emphasized that understanding change from those involved in its implementation is essential (Duck, 1993; Lau and Woodman, 1995; Weber and Manning, 2001; Smollan, 2006; Dibella, 2007)

Perceptions are generally studied because researchers and theorists believe that behaviour is influenced by an individual's cognition of acceptability, motives, and attitude towards the behaviour (Leung, 2013). It is essentially through perception

checking that individuals can fully understand each other (Abraham, 2017). Communication practices like perception checking lead to other positive aspects of communication which may assist managers in improving organisational strategies.

Cohen (2019) conducted a study wherein he delves into the common fallacies of change management. One of the fallacies that he discussed was that implementation processes are incorporated into a number of OCM models. He argues how possible that is when change evolves unevenly and in unpredictable ways. Cohen's article does not imply that all process models of change should be discarded but rather that they be augmented with practices that simplify change for people, sustain momentum, and generate anticipated results. The goal of such practices is to shift from a change management protocol that expects an organization to conform to a model, but to rather accommodate the unique needs of the organisation, its culture, people and the unique dynamics at play. Furthermore, that positive change begins with tangible outcomes, while negative change begins with a methodology (Cohen, 2019).

Saul, (2009) conducted a study on managers perceptions of change management within a Gauteng public service sector. The goal of his study was to assess how knowledge, skills and attitudes of managers can be improved through an understanding of their responses to change initiatives within the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). That is the government entity responsible for distributing social grants to more than 16 million South Africans.

In this study, 31.1% of respondents reported that managers resisted change within the SASSA, 42% indicated that it was supported by management. Furthermore, that managers differed significantly in their approach to managing the change initiatives within SASSA, their knowledge levels, and their attitudes to the initiative. Lastly that junior and senior/middle managers have different views about the effects of changes within SASSA, which generally affected junior operations managers (Saul, 2009).

His study recommended that studies concerning the implementation and evaluation of the change process within organisations should in future involve all levels of participants such as senior managers, middle managers and employees. This study supports and further builds on this recommendation as it explores change management perceptions and approaches of senior, middle, and lower managers in two Gauteng Provincial Government departments. This was done by investigating the

current change practices, processes, policies, and mechanisms in place for e-Gov and GDE departments and how managers in the departments perceive and experience these change management approaches. This study addresses the current gap in literature which provides a better understanding of change management dynamics within provincial departments in Gauteng, from a South African perspective as there is a knowledge gap in this regard.

2.10 Conclusion

The following trends were identified: Studies conducted on the conditions and challenges of innovation in public sector, although some of the results may not be applicable to other countries or generalisable due to contextual constraints (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017; Nograsek, 2012; Torfing et al., 2019). Studies that tend to emphasize the content of change, rather than the processes through which organizational change is implemented. Content factor examines the content of the change, as well as the organisation's strategies, structures, and systems (Kuipers et al. 2014). Most public management research concerning organizational change focuses on changes at the sector or national level (e.g. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004 in van der Voet et al., 2015). Stewart and Kringas 2003 in van der Voet et al., 2015) argues that in spite of the importance of organizational change for the practice of public management, this issue is rarely addressed as an implementation problem in public management research.

The following mistakes that are commonly made in the research of Organisational Change Management (as adapted from Glensor, 2010):

- There has been little empirical evidence to support the various change theories and approaches used by government departments (Guimaraes and Armstrong, 1998).
- Insufficient critical evaluation of current change theories (Todnem, 2005).
- There is little to no consensus regarding a framework for Organisational Change to encourage the development of a more pragmatic change framework (Todnem, 2005)
- Dissociating organisational change from organisational strategy (Burnes, 2004)

- A theory that states that change processes cannot be measured or show tangible results because they are flawed in their own right (Edmonstone, 1995, Kaplan & Norton, 2004)
- Results are inappropriately generalised to different situations and contexts with little or no relevance to the Gauteng provincial government level.

This study is aligned with a proposed agenda for the study of change management within public organisations that focuses on their complex nature by building theoretical bridges and performing in-depth empirical and analysis on change their processes (Kuipers et al., 2014). As submitted by a study by Truktrong & Rompho, (2018) that found that State Owned Entities and private organisations handle change differently. The research will interrogate if the departments have used Kotter's change management theory as the basis for the model proposed in the Change Management NMOG Guide by the DPSA.

This literature review summed up the definition of change management and provided a theoretical framework that underpins this study, that is organisation development. A review of the provincial government landscape and its dynamics, highlighting likely triggers of organisational change such as restructuring/ the metamorphosis of business tools/processes within the Gauteng provincial government departments was undertaken. This section reviewed and critiqued the key discussions and change management theories that have been developed by academics with the aim of clarifying the fundamental concepts and building blocks of organisational change and the change management processes followed. Furthermore, change management models, change mechanisms and the section critiqued the use of a change management framework within change management processes to measure the overall effectiveness of organisational change. Lastly, critical perceptions to change management processes more particularly from a Gauteng Provincial Government perspective was undertaken. This review was undertaken to locate this research within an existing body of literature, to furthermore motivate the need for this study by backing up the problem statement and offering insight into the ways that literature relates to the research questions and problem statement whilst clearly indicating the knowledge gap for this particular study.

Chapter 3

3. Research Methodology and Information Collection

The primary objective of this methodology chapter is to comprehensively discuss the tools used and the methods undertaken by this study to answer its research questions. To take the reader through a journey that this research undertook in a quest to add to the knowledge gap that prompted this study.

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This study's approach was a qualitative case study on two Gauteng Provincial Government departments. The reason for this is to be able to undertake an in-depth exploration of approaches to change management at a provincial level. The study therefore aimed to gain a better understanding of change management within provincial departments in Gauteng, from a South African perspective as there is a knowledge gap in this regard which suggests that there is a lot that we can still learn. Through an open-ended exploration, this research analysed the perceptions around the value and role of a change management policy. Patton (2014) affirms that qualitative research helps to fill knowledge gaps by investigating what works, what doesn't, and why. Qualitative research is rooted in understanding context and to this end, uses empirical evidence to attempt to provide insight on the nature of the phenomenon of interest which in this case, is change management dynamics from a Gauteng Provincial Government perspective. As a research tool, Case Studies provide researchers with the opportunity to collect, document, and explain evidence about their objectives and questions (Glensor, 2010). Furthermore, pursuing a case study, involves ongoing analysis the categorisation of data, comparing, and reporting of different perspectives which is of interest for readers who are interested in understanding the context of national and provincial department approaches to change management (Patton, 2014).

This study aligned itself to the characteristics of a case study as adapted from Glensor 2010 wherein they purport that case studies are stories – this study tells a story framed in literature and analysed through the lens of the perceptions of managers within the

GPG about change management, simply because stories present knowledge in a more powerful way than facts alone. Multiple sources of evidence were used in this case study, that is primary data such as participant interviews, existing legislative and departmental frameworks, and secondary data such as reports, journal articles, conference documents. These sources of evidence are triangulated when building a case study. This case study sought to explain context in a meaningful way, to demonstrate a broad understanding of change management, which was openly explored within the context of GPG, through the frame of literature and the lived experiences and perceptions of managers. Organizations, situations or contexts are the focal point of case studies (Glensor, 2010). The scope of this case study was reasonable in that it wasn't too wide of a canvas, either temporally or spatially. The differences in the sizes of the departments provided an opportunity to analyse the influence that organisation size has on change and its processes. Glensor (2010) asserts that case studies may collect evidence quantitatively or qualitatively, this study is qualitative in nature and collected some data through interviews based on an interview guide, which assisted with protocol, however data regarding the participant ages and years of experience quantitative which supports the statement that it is not exclusively qualitative.

3.2 Background

Approval was obtained by the researcher to conduct the study within the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the Gauteng Department of eGovernment (e-Gov). However, upon seeking participants, the researcher was informed that the e-Gov does not have change management nor Organisation Development Directorates as those functions are centralized to the Gauteng Office of the Premier (OoP), which is a Gauteng Provincial Department (GPG) in its own right. An in-depth role that the OoP plays in the change management value chain is outlined in the findings and discussions chapters five and six (5&6) of this report. The total population of the above-mentioned three Gauteng Provincial Departments is 94153 (Wahed, 2022). This study could not obtain data that is representative of statistics based on job categories or levels. This is too large a population to undertake a qualitative study at master's level. This study, therefore, came up with criteria to obtain a reasonable and manageable sample to undertake this explorative qualitative study.

3.3 Sampling criterion

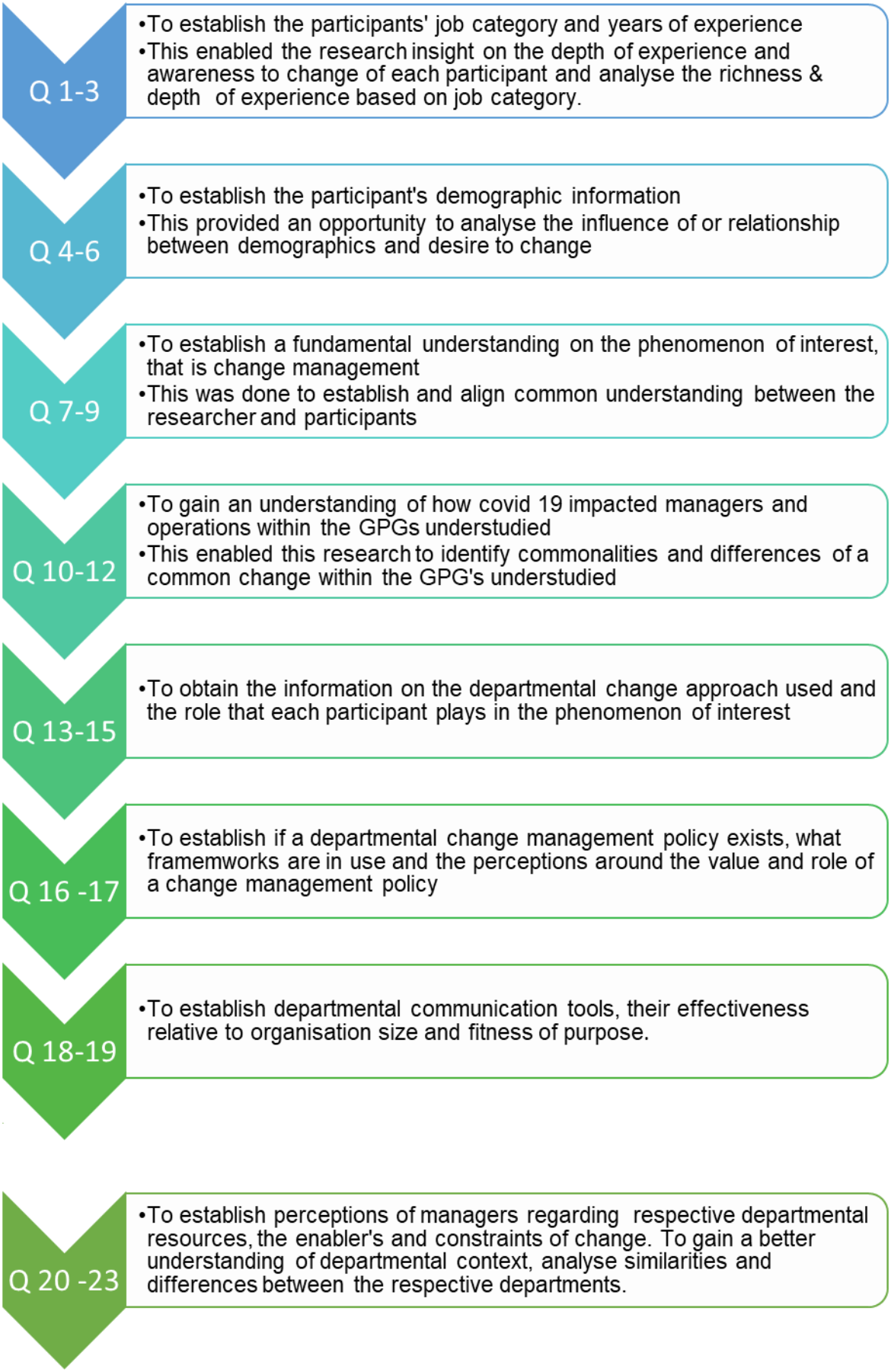
The Gauteng Department of Education currently employs ninety one thousand nine hundred and eighty one (91 981) individuals (63 863 females and 28 118 males) between schools and Head Office (A. Wahed, personal communication, April 2022). The Gauteng Department of e-Government was officially proclaimed on the 11 August 2015 and currently employs eight hundred and thirteen (813) individuals comprised of 441 females and 372 males. (A. Wahed, personal communication, April 2022).

It is argued by qualitative researchers that there is no straight-forward answer to the question of 'how many' and that sample size depends on many factors, including epistemological, methodological, and practical ones (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018). Through purposive criterion and snowball sampling, the researcher engaged twelve (12) participants who met the sample criterion. The criteria were that the participants had to be in a management position. The management categories were Assistant Directors who are junior managers, Deputy Directors who are middle managers, and senior managers who are either Directors or Chief Directors. These individuals had to have acquired a minimum of five years of working experience within the public sector. The reason why managers were chosen as the sample of study was because they interact daily with and support employees and have to report and review change mechanisms and approaches that are deemed ineffective or redundant. This is supported by a supposition that discussions of organizational change would not be complete without talking about leadership and management (Yue, 2021). This is because managers are the key role players in devising policies and strategies that will assist the organisation reach the desired change objectives. The researcher was intentional about engaging participants who were employed within key business units that are instrumental in change management processes within the GPG. These sampling techniques enabled the identification and selection of proficient and well-informed individuals regarding the phenomenon of interest, that is, change management within the context of the GPG. In addition to knowledge, experience, and the ability to communicate in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner, the importance of availability and willingness to participate, were key to the success of obtaining information-rich cases (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

3.4 Information collection tool

To address the research objectives that are outlined in this study, information was collected using semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool. The below interview guide, approved by the ethics committee, was used to guide the conversations or research interviews. In a semi-structured interview, a pre-written outline provides both a topic structure and flexibility to adapt to the content and context of the interview and the interviewer and participant interaction (Knott, Rao, Summers, & Teeger, 2022).

The following model presents a flowchart for the interview guide to provide insight on the purpose of the questions to aid in answering the research questions of this study.


Q 1-3
•To establish the participants' job category and years of experience
•This enabled the research insight on the depth of experience and awareness to change of each participant and analyse the richness & depth of experience based on job category.
Q 4-6
•To establish the participant's demographic information
•This provided an opportunity to analyse the influence of or relationship between demographics and desire to change
Q 7-9
•To establish a fundamental understanding on the phenomenon of interest, that is change management
•This was done to establish and align common understanding between the researcher and participants
Q 10-12
•To gain an understanding of how covid 19 impacted managers and operations within the GPGs understudied
•This enabled this research to identify commonalities and differences of a common change within the GPG's understudied
Q 13-15
•To obtain the information on the departmental change approach used and the role that each participant plays in the phenomenon of interest
Q 16 -17
•To establish if a departmental change management policy exists, what framemworks are in use and the perceptions around the value and role of a change management policy
Q 18-19
•To establish departmental communication tools, their effectiveness relative to organisation size and fitness of purpose.
Q 20 -23
•To establish perceptions of managers regarding respective departmental resources, the enabler's and constraints of change. To gain a better understanding of departmental context, analyse similarities and differences between the respective departments.

1. Job title: _____
2. Occupational category:_____
3. Interviewee's years of experience: _____
4. Which one of the following age groups represents your age:

18-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-64

5. Which one of the following best represents your race: African/Black; Coloured; Indian; White; Prefer not to say
6. Which one of the following represents your sex: Male Female Prefer not to say
7. In your view, what is change management?
8. In your experience, what is the definition of change management in relation to your department?
9. What prompts change, what or who are the change drivers in your organisation?
10. How has the covid 19 pandemic changed your operations in the department?
11. Can you identify positive changes to the organisation as a result of the pandemic?
12. Can you identify negative changes to the organisation as a result of the pandemic?
13. How do you approach/ how would you describe change management in your organisation?
14. Do you feel that this approach is effective, please motivate your answer?
15. What is your role in change management of the organisation?
16. To your knowledge, what policies are in place to guide on change management processes?
17. In your view, what role do you think that policy plays in change management?
18. How would you describe your department's communication channels regarding change management?
19. How is change communication managed in your organisation?
20. In your view, would you say you are adequately resourced to successfully carry out change?
21. Based on your experience, which constraints or challenges affect change and its processes in your department?
22. In your experience, which enablers should be in place first to enable effective change management? Motivate your answer
23. Is there anything else that you think is necessary to take note of to address these challenges?

It should be noted that there were deviations in some questions posed to participants as a result of their responses to the questions, this is in alignment with a semi-structured interview. The purpose of the semi- structured interviews is to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's unique viewpoint, rather than understanding the phenomenon from a general perspective (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The qualitative nature of the study allowed flexibility in terms of the conversations. Responses of participants varied as they were based on their experiences, their directorates, and their departments. At times, these responses triggered probing questions that broadened the conversations and provided depth in the information that was obtained from participants. The dynamics between interviewer and participant should be considered throughout the process, no matter what form the interview takes (Knott et al., 2022). Semi-structured interviews allowed this research the opportunity to uncover deeper understanding of contextual GPG dynamics that impact the success change management processes.

This information collection tool was tested through a virtual pilot research interview scheduled on the Microsoft Teams App (Teams). Teams is a business communication platform developed by Microsoft as part of its 365 family of products that offers workspace chat, videoconferencing (that can be recorded and transcribed), file storage, and integrations with applications in the MS 365 Suite. The reason that this program was used was due to the Gauteng Provincial Government's licensing with Microsoft Enterprise which means that all the target sample had access to it and were familiar with its use. The reasons for undertaking the pilot research interview were to determine if the interview purpose and questions were clear, unambiguous, relevant and were presented in a logical sequence (Glensor, 2010). Additionally, to determine the length of time it would take to undertake a virtual research interview to factor in dynamics around virtual interviews such as connection issues, technical issues that may relate to scheduling, sound, video. Lastly to test the MS Teams features such as recording, and transcription.

The virtual interviews enable flexibility for the research and its participants. Due to the managerial status of this study's participants, they are often between meetings, problem-solving, or carrying out tasks that may have a direct or indirect impact on operations within their respective workplaces. On more than one occasion, pre-scheduled interviews had to be rescheduled at the last minute to accommodate the

managers demanding roles. Virtual interviews also enabled this research the convenience of enabling interviews to take place regardless of the location of the researcher and participants. The DPSA had issued a return-to-work mandate, the majority of the participants had returned to work, some of the managers had physical demands and meetings in the workplace, although this was not the case for all of them. This resulted in some of the interviews taking place after hours in the comfort of the researcher and participants' respective residences. The research interviews were an average of sixty minutes although some of the interviews were extended a little bit further but no longer than an hour and thirty (30) minutes. Most of the interviews were one-on-one virtual interviews however an unplanned group interview was conducted with three participants wherein one of the managers invited two subordinate assistant directors to participate. All participants consented to participation in the study, were furnished with participant information sheets, consent forms, and were made aware of the minimal risk that the ethics committee had assigned to the study. No individual was coerced to participate in the study, no individual received a financial benefit from the study and all participants were advised that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any stage.

3.5 Data management

The Witswatersrand University had provisioned for each student to have access to the Microsoft 365 Office Suite (Word, Excel, One Drive, Teams) as well as a student email address that is linked to the Google package. This is at no additional cost to the student. These applications were the primary applications used by this research to manage information (data). These applications were password protected and used on a single laptop, which was also password protected.

Due to the interviews being virtual in nature, the MS Team app was used as the interview platform of choice, the researcher was also able to access transcripts of the interviews, as this is an accessibility feature of the application (Microsoft Inc, 2023). The researcher saved these transcripts as MS Word documents. The interview transcripts are this study's primary data. That is raw information and evidence obtained directly from participants through surveys, and interviews that has not been analysed, organised and is not synthesized (Cerar, Nell, & Reiche, 2021). The recordings from the interviews were downloaded from MS Teams and backed up onto the students'

respective password protected MS One Drive account as well as the students Google Drive (using the students Google email address). These records are also primary data of this study.

3.6 Data Cleaning

The “transcription” feature of MS Word enabled this research to upload/embed the recording in either MP3, MP4, M4A format on the transcript itself. This enabled this research to listen to the recording whilst correcting and contextualising the transcripts, this was necessitated by the machines capturing of spoken word not always contextual to what is understood. This stage was also necessitated by the need for correction of language barriers in cases wherein vernacular (Isizulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, Afrikaans, were used) where the machine was not able to interpret or correctly capture what was actually said in the interview. This was the initial data-cleaning stage undertaken by this study. The transcripts were additionally subjected to intelligent verbatim, that is the act of eliminating unnecessary words, such as “ums”, “ahs”, and stammers (Knott et al., 2022).

This study created an MS Excel Spreadsheet wherein the original descriptors, demographics and aliases assigned to each participant. Upon undertaking incremental data cleaning, this research began to remove identifiers from the transcripts. This was done to ensure that each participant’s identity is protected and anonymized. Additionally, this stage of data cleaning ensured that data coding and data analysis would be unbiased. Participant transcripts were renamed according to alphabets ranging from ‘A- L’, in no specific order related to the order of interview, their job description, job category, function, department, gender, or race. The cleaned transcripts were then saved under the assigned alias and uploaded onto Atlas.ti where data coding would be undertaken. ATLAS.ti is computer data analysis software that facilitates analysis of qualitative data for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. As part of its features, it enables an institution to manage licences efficiently by apportioning licences as “per seat licence”. The student obtained a five (5) month seat licence under the Witswatersrand University license with Atlas.ti for students. This was free of charge to the student.

3.7 Data analysis

This process entailed systematically organizing, integrating, and scrutinizing data in search of themes, patterns, and relationships (Neuman, 2016). Data analysis enables the researcher to improve understanding, expand theory, and advance knowledge of a construct (Harris, 2018). This study examined transcripts of interviews, audio & video recordings (where available) to observe the facial expressions, body language, gestures, tone of voice, any delays, or reactions, made by participants, in response to questions posed. Following the initial transcriptions of the interviews, field notes developed by author were cross-checked with the transcriptions. Cross-checking the transcribed interviews with field notes was done to ensure that no information was missed in the transcription. In essence, data do not exist independently of the practices that generate them, as they are interpretive acts committed by both subjects and the researcher (Eakin & Gladstone, 2020). Data analysis was an iterative process that involved listening to the recording, reading the transcripts, making notes of information that was of interest to this research. Using the Atlas.ti software, and Microsoft Excel, coding and categorizing data were used to analyze and interpret qualitative data with the main constructs in the research question identified as patterns and themes.

Data were analysed first, following change management literature, using the theoretical framework to provide a base for understanding and interpretation. Then data reduction took place, this involved data categorization according to captured basic themes apparent in the data. That is identifying codes and themes that emerged within conversations, out of theory and that which was structural to context. Lastly, the codes, themes and concepts were related to the literature by linking the data to theoretical and practical issues.

3.8 Coding and Themes

The purpose of coding is to organize, describe, and analyze data. However, it is also a way to generate analytic insights from the data (Knott et al., 2022). The first round of analysis produced numerous codes that captured basic themes that emerged within the data (Heracleous, Papachroni, Andriopoulos, & Gotsi, 2016). The initial codes identified for this study are outlined in the table below and they were selected based on the following reasons:- they were relevant to the research in that they were

repeated by more than one participant (trend), they stood out to the researcher (interest), they were linked to key concepts in the research study such as “approach”, contextual characteristics of the field under study, being the public sector, such as “bureaucracy”, and so on and so forth. In a dataset consisting of multiple interviews, there were salient and minority statements among participants, as well as consensus or disagreement regarding topics of interest to the researcher (Knott et al., 2022). These statements and clusters codes in relation to the research questions, are also knowns as - code groups, categories, or themes. The codes were then grouped according to themes that emerged within conversations, were structural to context, emerged out of theory, and that is displayed in the table below.

Groups/themes	Emerged within conversations	Emerged out of theory	Structural to context
Codes	Back-office support	Communication	
	Change responsibility	Definitions	Policy
	Examples of change	Inclusion / participation	Management considerations
	Interdisciplinary - silo mitigations	Nature of change	Lessons from Covid
	The future organisation	Reinforcement (Making change stick)	Approaches
		Tools	Bureaucracy
		Triggers,	Enablers
		Types of changes	Driver

Table 2: Codes and themes

A wide variety of approaches are available to researchers, each based on a different (but often implicit) conceptualization of qualitative research, meaningful knowledge production, and key constructs such as themes and analytic methods (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The essence of thematic analysis is identifying the patterns and themes and attaching meaning to the data through this researcher’s analysis.

The significance of grouping the codes in this fashion was to provide linkages between theory and literature with data and drawing out the richness of primary data from the interviews to gain a better understanding of change management within the specific Gauteng Provincial Government Departments researched. It was prudent to remember that the overarching goal of the data was intended to answer the research questions of this study, that are:

1.1 What are the current change practices, processes, policies, and mechanisms in place for the Gauteng Provincial Government departments?

1.2 How do managers in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments perceive and experience these change management approaches?

3.9 Positionality and limitations,

3.9.1 Positionality

The researcher is a Senior Admin Officer in the Recruitment and Selection Directorate within the GDE employ. The units and directorates used for data collection/wherein key informants/the sample were targeted from, are different directorates in different Chief Directorates within the Branch Corporate Management in the GDE Organisational structure. The researcher was aware that positionality within the GDE may risk bias in the study. This was mitigated by the researcher maintaining the position of a student with participants at all times, the anonymisation and the removal of identifiers and of transcripts.

Obtaining research approval and data from within the organisation enabled the researcher more advantage and convenience as the researcher was more familiar with the structure and therefore had better access to information through the key informants and GDE specific documentation such as policies and reports where necessary.

3.9.2 Limitations

The DPSA had issued a return-to-work directive to all government departments however, Covid 19 and remote working option presented itself as a challenge in this study as some of the participants (in the different departments) were difficult to get a hold of. There was a delay in response to emails and contacting the participants via

telephone was a mammoth task as they were not in the office to respond to telephone calls.

Some of the participants had promised the researcher to send strategies, documentation and organograms however this was never provided regardless of follow-up. This may be due to the demanding managerial positions that the participants hold. Access to information, particularly from participants who were not employed in the GDE was a challenge of note. There may have been a lack of trust from the participants, and this may have affected the quality and depth of the data collected. The researcher remains mindful that in the engagements, positionality may have shaped the various sets of data differently.

This study notes that millennials were not represented in the sample, depending on perspective, this can be a challenge in that this study is void of the perspectives of this generation and the role they play in contributing to change in their respective spaces of work.

The qualitative nature of this study does not assume that the findings of this study are generalizable. They present perceptions of managers targeted within the GPG departments. It is possible for the readers to judge whether and in what way these findings can be generalized to other situations by theorizing their data in terms of difference (rather than substance) and providing ample context and conceptual detail (Eakin & Gladstone, 2020).

Due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, replicability presents a challenge in that interviews cannot be reproduced, as they rely heavily upon the interaction between the researcher and the participants at a particular moment (Knott et al., 2022). The provision of the interview guide is intended to mitigate and guide researchers intending to replicate the study.

3.10 Ethics

Research approval letters from the Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov), the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and verbal permission to conduct the study with Gauteng Office of the Premier (OoP) was obtained. The reason why only verbal permission was obtained is because as a government department, the OoP does not have a research department, the service is outsourced to service providers

according to need. Furthermore, the specific government was not a case study but rather emerged out of the process of data collection. The participants did however provide consent to participate in the study. Necessary ethics clearance was obtained from the Witwatersrand University Ethics Committee.

Participants were informed that this study is for academic purposes, and were given details about the purpose, aims and benefit of the study. They were asked to give their written or verbal consent before data collection began. Their responses were treated with confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation where they are employed) were anonymous in the research product unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy was maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Participants were interviewed and observed by means of a virtual meeting, consent was obtained from participants for the interviews to be recorded for transcription and researcher reference purposes. Participants were required to set aside 45-60 minutes at a time most convenient to the participant as interviews were semi structured with the aim of obtaining rich primary data.

The researcher ensured that data collection instruments are tested before commencement of the data collection process, adhered to provisions stipulated by ethical clearance obtained from institutional ethics committee, and explicitly communicated to participants that there was no financial benefit in participation in the study. This was done to ensure that participants were not advantaged or disadvantaged in any way and that the study did no harm to participants and the respective provincial departments. Participants were reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There were no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants were not paid to participate in this study.

All research data was stored on password protected cloud services, that is; Microsoft One drive and Google drive, the university will be granted access to the data upon request. However, the data stored did not have any identifiers to uphold the confidentiality of participants and the respective GPG’s. The results were communicated in a research report/ dissertation and as per research output requirements of the university.

3.11 Trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability

The triangulation of data collection through key informant interviews, observations and explicitly, communicating the findings to the extent of citing direct quotations of participants which highlight patterns and noting differences was an attempt to increase the credibility and validity of the results of this study.

The researcher explicitly documented the methodology used to answer the research questions under the supervision of an academic principal (supervisor) who was outside the research to follow, audit, guide and critique this study's research process. This was an attempt to ensure the dependability of the study.

3.12 Summary and conclusion of the chapter

This chapter explained the research methodology that used to collect information and the procedures that were followed to analyse information collected through virtual interviews and desktop review of existing departmental documents and reports. A pure qualitative research paradigm was influenced by the purpose and the nature of this research project. The research used purposive criterion and snowball to engage twelve (12) participants.

The triangulation of data collection was through key informant interviews, observations and explicitly, communicating the findings to the extent of citing direct quotations of participants which highlight patterns and noting differences was an attempt to increase the credibility and validity of the results of this study. Data from this qualitative study were analysed thematically using a descriptive analysis, and the results were presented narratively. All the data collected from the interviews and desktop review were interconnected to enhance the study's coherence, uniqueness and trustworthiness. The next chapter will present the research results and findings.

Chapter 4

4. Results- Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore change approaches and mechanisms undertaken by provincial departments and examine what looking at the two departments reveals to us about change management at a Gauteng Provincial Government level. Additionally, this research sought to explore the perceptions that managers have on change management, departmental change approaches and what role a change management policy could play in the governance of change within the respective provincial government departments. An in-depth exploration of approaches to change management at a provincial level was undertaken through interviews and desktop review of existing literature. The research process involved reading, organizing, and interpreting data, producing findings as best interpreted by the researchers' theoretical perspective, bank of knowledge, personal experience and creativity. Eakin & Gladstone (2020) posit that the interpretation of data and researcher's analysis is fundamental to the operation of analysis. Data can be explored, analyzed, displayed and communicated using graphics, because graphics stimulate insights, condenses and summarizes data (Snee, 2020).

This chapter tells a story of the lessons learnt from undertaking the research, the information will be presented through contextual findings and graphical analysis. The aim was gaining a better understanding of change management dynamics within provincial departments in Gauteng, from a South African perspective as there is an academic knowledge gap in this regard.

4.1 Current Change Practices, Processes, Policies, and Mechanisms in Place for the GPG Departments

4.1.1 Commonalities in research findings

This section outlines the contextual similarities found in current change practices, process and mechanisms in place within the GPG departments researched. This section is informed by information collected through interview transcripts and literature.

4.1.1.1 Management structures

The first contextual finding of this study is that the standard approach to any change is management structures. Participant B explained that “the current change management process is a standard type of a continuous process, that is management structures in place, comprised of top management which meets on a weekly basis, the Executive Management Team (EMT), which meets on a quarterly basis and your Broad Management Team (BMT) and so forth.” Those are standing structures in place, in every department, that are there to manage the change as it arises within that department. Additionally, participant B proceeded to explain that “there are response structures that are set up by the standard structures which would be steering committees or task teams on the basis of the need that exists at that particular point in time”. Steering committees are more formal and cross functional structures that enable a bit more space in terms of planning, guiding, and steering a process across the different functions within the department. Similar to steering committees, aimed at rapid response to particular projects, are war rooms. An example of a war room would be one that is formed around infrastructure challenges, the movement of a department from one building to another, or 2023 online admissions. They are more short-term in nature and are aimed getting a particular project at the desired level of quality, to change the state itself. For these rapid response structures to be effective, it is imperative to have the (correct) participants in those particular committees and in war rooms. The composition of the war room, the makeup of the role players within the steering committee is critical.

Participants from the respective departments explained that a covid steering committee was the approach that was used to steer GPG during the unprecedented covid era. This is supported by the following quotes: “When we responded to Covid, it was a matter of setting up a steering committee, becoming a structure that will manage the change in the environment” participant B. “During covid the GPG convened a steering committee, so DG would give the marching orders and we would implement, and departments would also implement part of what is feasible for them” Participant G. This is additionally supported by evidence in the South African Covid 19 Report that the Cabinet established new structures such as the the National Coronavirus Command Council, National Disaster Management Centre and the National Joint

Operational and Intelligence Structure (NatJoints) and provincial steering committees, to coordinate the national response to the Coronavirus pandemic (Presidency of South Africa, 2021). This study learnt that the "Director General and Premier convened a Provincial Disaster Management Centre where Heads of Departments from all GPGs and Municipalities would converge at an executive or senior executive level. Inefficiencies were revealed and turn around to make decisions on those inefficiencies" participant E. In as far as participants could recall, "for the first time the turnaround in managing government was shortened and no long memos. We ran as one organization" participant G. Many of the participants agreed that this approach was effective under those times of uncertainty and rapid changes, however, whether the approach managed to filter to the lowest level, is another question.

The disadvantage of these rapid response structures is lack of accountability. This disadvantage is supported by the following quote "This is because they are interdisciplinary in nature, and often comprise of officials at the same job category level. Even in cases where different job category levels are in the committee or war room, they might not report to any of the members in the structure, in terms of the organisational structure" (participant E). It becomes a challenge particularly in cases where the structures are not compromised of relevant role players. This is reinforced by participant B's emphasis that "This is where it becomes important to have the (correct) participants in those particular committees and in war rooms and so forth, to make the ones that will be expected to, on a permanent basis, deliver on that function, to be part of that war room. So, the makeup of the role players within their steering committee is quite important from that point of view."

Ratana, Raksmey, & Danut (2020) make the claim that later theories hypothesise that change cannot be planned, and so the role of top managers is not that critical. However, the majority of this study's participants confirmed that the presence of a change champion, sponsor or driver was largely key to the success of any change process by participants. This is applicable to all types of change namely, cultural change, strategic change, structural change, a change project, and so forth. An example cited was if 4IR and digital transformation was a departmental goal and adapting to change in line operational plans, the change sponsor, i.e., the MEC needs to refer to this goal at every public engagement. It further drives the goal when the

HOD and senior managers are just as conversant and mirror what the MEC keeps preaching. That is what is meant by the availability of executive sponsorship at different levels. The same message and departmental goal must filter across the same way from the beginning to the end, even the lowest ranking official must know this goal and be able to provide an overview of what it entails in their own understanding.

The management structures in place (EMT, Top Management, BMT), is where the strategic and organisational change goals are discussed and planned in the GPG. Therefore, contrary to Ratana et al's claim that top managers are not critical to change given its unplanned nature, participants confirmed that change processes in GPG, rely heavily on the role of senior management. Where speaking of change sponsors and drivers, participants identified senior roles such as the MEC, HOD or SMS as key figures. They are required to communicate the changes from top management and engage their business units about the change, to advocate this change to their staff members so that they buy into this change. Continuously engaging employees on any work-related changes.

4.1.1.2 Change responsibility and drivers

The majority of this study's participants emphasised that the presence of a change champion, sponsor or driver was largely key to the success of any change process by participants. A change driver is a senior manager who leads and pushes the change processes within their line function. A change "sponsor" or "champion" (the terms are used interchangeably) is an executive/ top management representative i.e., the MEC or HOD, who becomes an advocate for a particular organisational change. The participants indicated that the responsibility of driving change rests with senior management. One of the participants (G) explained how officials are just facilitators in the process, that a change sponsor needs to be fully conversant with the change.

A theoretical finding of this study, informed by the above information, is that the Senior Management Service (SMS) Public Service Handbook incorporates all the determinations, directives and guidelines issued by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to the SMS (DPSA, 2003). It was issued in terms of regulation 1 D of chapter 4 of the PSR and must always be read in conjunction with the Act, the PSR, relevant collective agreements and circulars. Chapter 4 Performance Management

and Development provides guidance on the contracting and determination of assessment criteria. The chapter outlines criteria upon which SMS must be assessed against both components, with a weighting of 80:20 allocated to the Key Result Areas (KRAs) and the Core Management Criteria (CMC) respectively.

> *(a) KRAs describe what is expected from a member of the SMS in her/ his role. They focus attention on actions and activities that will assist units and ultimately the department in performing effectively. (b) The primary tool for capturing KRAs in a clear and concise manner is a work plan.*
>
> *Core Management Criteria (CMC)*
>
> *(a) The eleven CMCs of the SMS could be used to determine expected performance standards in Performance Agreements and to assess achievement through performance review and appraisal meetings.*
>
> *(b) The purpose of including the CMCs in the Performance Management System (PMDS) is to contribute to the process of developing a common understanding of, and set of expectations about, good management practice. These criteria and standards should not displace the importance of specific results-based performance criteria and expectations for a particular job and their relationship to the specific goals of the organisation.*
>
> *(c) The CMCs are supplementary to the specific performance criteria Key Results Area (KRAs) for any particular job in any specific department.*(DPSA, 2003)

There are eleven CMCs and Change Management is one of them. Furthermore, the handbook provides in depth information on competency frameworks, their significance and value being a key driver of effective Human Resource Management. One such competency identified is change management and it is defined “as the ability to initiate and support organisational transformation and change in order to successfully implement new initiatives and deliver on service delivery commitments” (DPSA, 2003). This is one of the dimensions evaluated at competency assessments, when a senior manager is recommended for appointment and according to the SMS Handbook, during performance management cycles.

The SMS cohort in the study were aware of the responsibility they have as change drivers within their respective business units, as accounting officers. This is supported by a view of one of the participants (B) that “change management is an inherent core management competency that each manager should be having in order to manage on a day-to-day basis as well as to many strategic changes within the department itself.”

Change management is not necessarily clearly articulated in SMS KRA's, in their PMD. This means that, it does not necessarily reflect as saying there's a change & outline the change management process but should for example, the manager conducting the performance review meeting with the member of SMS, look at and unpack the plans then inherent in that is a change aspect itself. Participant E added that, "it's a dimension within our scorecard, so when we get assessed, they ask, what change interventions are you going to do or you are expected to manage change when there's disruption." Therefore, there aren't necessarily indicators under a change management function, but rather, in terms of that particular change process. This was further reinforced by participant H who said "by virtue of them being forced to adjust when things are happening that is speaks to that (change management) and it will be change management in different ways. All directorates will respond based on their function/ perspective eg. HR responds to it in in terms of HR issues and so forth*."*

This means that change management is embedded in the responsibilities of senior management as change drivers, sponsors, or champions, even though there is no scorecard in place. To reiterate, a change driver is a senior manager who leads and pushes the change processes within their line function. A change "sponsor" or "champion" (the terms are used interchangeably) is an executive/ top management representative i.e., the MEC or HOD, who becomes an advocate for a particular organisational change. A substantial number of participants were of the view that change starts when the Head of Department (HOD) starts to own it, cascaded down to top management, BMT and depending on where it's more relevant, that whoever is a change agent can cascade the message down and get buy in from own subordinates.

4.1.1.3 Communication

Both contextual and theoretic findings stress the significance of communication. All the change management models outlined in this study have acknowledged the critical role that communication plays in change management. Across literature, poor communication is recorded as one of the key components that contribute to change failure (Cinar et al., 2019; Malatjie & Montana, 2021; Piercy et al., 2013). All the participants in the study confirmed the significance of communication within a GPG

department more particular within change management processes. The following statement bears evidence: “I would say communication is vital, it is very important. It's very important that we communicate more often because there is no way change management can be effective if communication is not there” (participant A).

The bureaucratic system in which the GPG operates, and the communication structures aligned to this system dictate that each business unit/line function head (SMS) is responsible to communicate developments with their business unit management (MMS) for implementation and or devising operational plans that will align with the strategic and organisational change plans discussed at management structures. A third of the participants felt that method is effective however, it wasn’t without its fair share of challenges. The following are quotes bear evidence to the challenges: “The managers who are part of the BMT or part of top management take decisions in those forums, but when they come out of that for them to become change agents, they distance themselves from those decisions. So there are some who really support the change, and then they'll influence their own subordinates to embrace change” (participant K) and “But now the challenge was with change agents having to communicate” (participant D).

One participant (H) mentioned that “some of us are lucky to have the managers that we have, because managers are not the same. Some managers give their subordinates feedback from BMT, some do not. The report backs should not just be about issues that are directed to that directorate. It should be broad feedback, to address the issue of operating in siloes/ silo mentality.” Further that, “we communicate but the problem is that those who have the information do not disseminate it well.”

Interestingly, in terms of theoretic findings, the Middle Management Competency Framework (MMCF) is silent on change management. This means that there is no criteria or scorecard upon which MMS must be assessed against change management. This is a cause for concern because middle managers (MMS) are responsible for ensuring implementation of strategies and plans that were conceptualised at SMS level. This study views this responsibility as an element of change management. This concern aligns with the notable challenge identified by one of the heads of departments which is the concerning “gap” between the category

levels. He was conducting interviews for the recruitment of senior management staff and identified that the gap between the different levels Deputies, Directors, Chief Directors, DDG's is way too vast. The main concern was that officials do not understand how government works.

In addition to the word-of-mouth communication, and staff meetings that take place within line functions, departments have internal communication functions as well as the GPG Communications that convey organisation wide information, through emails and posters. The trouble with this form of communication is that not every person in the organisation has a device that enables them access to emails, i.e., cleaners, drivers and security guards and often these officials may be illiterate. This is because according to the PSR, no matric /senior certificate is required for appointment in these levels. Furthermore, the biggest challenge that emerged across participants was that even those with access to emails most often just do not read them. This means that even if there is communication relating to organisational changes, there is a high likelihood that it will be missed if specific attention is not drawn to officials regarding a particular change or the communication thereof. This is supported by participant A "they are trying their best to communicate, but I think they should explore other ways of communication, sometimes the communication reaches us as the recipients very late". Participant F stated that "those who drive change management will report that they have done so but unfortunately this does not always filter to the lower levels." As a result, many participants confirmed that there is a void in change management as a practice and as a science in GPG and as a result change is not well managed through communication(s). This is supported by the following quotations: "We don't have change management as a practice and as a science in GPG" (Participant E), "Let's be honest, change management is amiss in GPG" (Participant K).

A lack of effective communication results in confusion. It contributes to the inability or failure of individual employees to locate themselves within the organisation or a failure to see the bigger picture.

5.1.1. 4 Policy

This study found that none of the departments that were participant to this study had a change management policy. Participant D argued that "you wouldn't expect change management to have a policy because change being change cannot be limited or

confined only to one framework depending on the type of change you are implementing." Another participant (A) argued that "the vast policies within the departments themselves are change policies, that they may not spell out or be specific to change however they instruct and guide the department on processes to follow to either promote or improve service delivery."

Change management in the GPGs are supposed to be guided by DPSA Change Management NMOG Guide, coupled with the change management models or frameworks outlined in the literature review section of this study. Frameworks are support structures that form a particular set of beliefs, ideas, or rules, which may be used to approach/address problems or decide on a course of action. The frameworks are useful in providing an overview of what the process should look like however, they have little regard of the significance of context and its impact in the ultimate result achieved. These change management frameworks are derived from theoretical, and academic literature which can then be customised to the public service. What was interesting to note was that none of the participants in this study explicitly referred to the NMOG, and only one mentioned Kotter's change management model. The following quotes support this finding "I haven't gone through it, I don't want to lie. I haven't checked it myself, my take it is that you might find that it's a framework" (participant F). "if it exists, it's not known" (Participant E), "If I look at the public sector, there isn't a real change management guideline or framework from national." (participant K)

The challenge with frameworks is that they are not aligned to a policy, therefore they are not clearly defined to guide strategy, objectives are ambiguous, strategies are not sufficiently detailed to achieve objectives, timebound targets are not set, and no master planning budget is available for achieving the ambiguous objectives (HEI2, 2015, p15 in Ratana et al., 2021).The rationale cited by one of the participants for the nonexistence of a policy was that the nature and type of change varies, it cannot be limited or confined to one framework or methodology. Therefore, considerations around type of change being undertaken, suitability of model and fitness of purpose, the type and size of organization undergoing change must be indulged.

Some of the participants recognised the need for a change management and this is demonstrated by the following quotations: Participant B "I think there is a need for a

policy around change management which will cover your basics". Participant F "Policy is crucial as it will outline the change management process, that will ensure that all employees are on par with the reasons and requirements of change." Participant E" Not to know, what we should do when change comes and where to run to, there are no defined protocols on how". Many of them citing that it [policy] would ensure that all the stakeholders that are involved in the change and are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and the expectations that are created through this policy. They acknowledged that a change management policy should cover the basic types of changes and the triggers, that it would assist in providing guidance, alleviating fear, instilling confidence and readiness, encouraging buy-in, and assist in managing the process from end to end to ensure accountability, reinforcement, and higher change success rates. In fact, the statement of policy direction is very influential on the effectiveness of the public organisations (Homberg, Vogel, & Weiherl, 2019).

4.1.2 Differences in findings

This section provides a zoom in on the intricacies and differences found in current change practices, process and mechanisms in place within the respective GPG departments researched. This is significant because each department has its own organisational culture and dynamics regardless of the similar context within which they operate. This section will provide the reader with organisational context, which cannot be ignored in a case study design.

4.1.2.1 Gauteng Department of Education

As described in greater detail within the theoretical framework (chapter 2, section 2.1) of this study, the function of change management in this department was embedded in the OD Directorate. The purpose of OD is to align the functional structure of a department with its mandate, yielding a more efficient and effective department.

A contextual finding of this study regarding departmental operations, is that some of the triggers of change in this department are change in legislation, change in mandates, adverse findings and challenges within directorates or units. This is supported by the following quotes "Ad hoc requests [informed by change in legislation, change in mandates, adverse findings and challenges within directorates or units] are

submitted to Organisation Development (OD) Directorate, an analysis is undertaken to verify the mandate against a service delivery model and then based on that, the OD Directive on Changes to the Organisational Structures by Departments and in alignment with necessary prescripts, revise the current configuration in consultation with the MPSA" (Participant J). The NMOG Guide on change management is used in conjunction with the OD Directive on Changes to the Organisational Structures by OD Directorates only within government departments. Change engagement sessions are then conducted with various internal stakeholders such as senior managers, organised labour, and directorates or districts.

As mentioned in the previous section, management structures are a main feature in the current change approach used in this department. This study understands that to be aligned to the bureaucratic system that underpins government. Therefore, the expectation is that the understanding and communication of the key issues raised in the in forums that senior managers attend will be communicated with respective business units and strategically incorporated into operations to ensure that the change mandate is implemented across the department. Effective communication is vital for delivering information and preventing misinformation to a broad spectrum of audiences, through the hierarchical dynamics, and the capacity constraints (Haji Sismat, 2021).

The kind of change that is being undergone, dictates the need for change agents or change champions. Participant I clarified that, "it may not necessarily be the same individual as a change agent for all changes. It may be senior manager, or the manager may elect a representative from the business unit." These individuals are expected to advocate and drive change within their respective business units. Participant J added that, "they [the change agents] will be attending the change meetings and expected to share whatever information they got from the forum with colleagues in their respective business units because they would have a better understanding of the change." Participant F confirmed these quotes by saying, "but we are not talking collectively as a department to say managers know that this is change. Go back to your directorate. Here's a presentation, talk to them. Tell them about the change, preach. Advocate this change to your lower staff members so that they buy into this"

Participants explained that change in this department is usually approached or implemented in phases and through road shows (a series of presentations held at different locations leading up to a change event). This is because this is a large department, change is a big thing, it is uncomfortable. Meaning you can't implement it all at once. Therefore, obtaining buy-in is key to drive change. This is where organised labour and collective bargaining comes in."

Theory indicates that organised labour, that is trade union parties, were established in terms of the law that serve the interests of employees as provided for in Public Service Sector Bargaining Council in line with Labour Relations Act 1995. Within the context of this department, participants explained that organised labour engages with the employer through collective bargaining in meetings known as "chamber" categorised by specific task teams. They further added that task teams are comprised of various representatives throughout the department from the employer side to address issues in terms of that task team, these are individual's representative in line with their scope of work. It is at chamber where issues of mutual interest between labour union and the employer are deliberated. It is critical that change strategies or policies are consulted with the parties in the chamber so that the employer can get buy-in and so that organised labour can also assist the employer in terms of the implementation process. This is supported by a quote from participant L confirming that "we have chamber whereby the proposed changes are presented in that committee, and then the labour unions will take the message and cascade it to their members. Labour unions are ready to assist with buy in unions play a very important role that we can even mention it as one of our departmental communicating channels."

One quarter of participants confirmed that the current change approach used by this department is "partly effective". The reasons why they categorised it as partly effective is due to the challenges that were associated with this approach. The size, culture and organisational dynamics affect the change agility of an organisation. Participant B explained "that large organizations are very difficult to change direction quickly and that it takes time to get the communication levels and understanding levels down to the lowest level within the department." There are inconsistencies in effective communication regarding access and understanding of internal communiqué, and the dissemination of decisions taken in management forums within the department. This

contributes to communication breakdown, and an ignorance of individual's contribution to organisation functionality. Employees do not understand their role within the greater scheme of the departmental mandate and mechanics, and that greatly influences change agility and sluggish change management and resistance to change that governments are often associated with.

Unfortunately, the department did not escape the consequences of state capture. Known cases such the R12 895 852.00 spent on a contracts with the likes of Bosasa/ African Global Operations, the R430million that was allegedly spent on PPE to fumigate schools during the peak of covid 19 pandemic. The countless known and unknown theft of school funds cases, irregular appointment of service providers, have all deprived the department of directing those funds towards implementation of positive change that can be seen and felt by all stakeholders. These are some challenges that contribute to the department's inability to respond as quickly to change. The researcher did not raise a specific question on state capture and it is interesting to note that despite evidence that this is a big challenge in the department it was not brought up by any of the participants.

5.1.2.2 Gauteng Department of eGovernment

In complying to ethical practices, this research obtained approval from the Head of Department of the Gauteng Department of eGovernment (e-Gov) to undertake the study. However, upon undertaking the study it was discovered that e-Gov does not have a standard internal organisational structure, like most other GPG's but rather an interim organisational structure. This triggered a deeper probe into the department which revealed that the e-Gov was borne from what was previously known as the Gauteng Shared Service Centre also known as the GSSC.

Established in 2001, the core business mandate of the Gauteng Shared Service Centre was to provide support services to the GPG Departments in the areas of Human Resources, Procurement, Finance, Technology Support Services and Internal Auditing (GSSC, 2006). To improve service delivery, the GSSC focused on making economies of scale, standardizing technology, and providing a single leading edge technological base through centralization. The goal of this Department was to free up the line departments to concentrate on higher value-added tasks to improve

management focus and ensure internal support functions are provided professionally, efficiently and effectively. As a result, duplication was reduced, and funds were allocated more efficiently between core and support functions (GSSC, 2006). As part of the GSSC's efforts to streamline its back-office functions, a Corporate Services unit was formed, these functions were previously performed by externally focused business units without a formal team structure. During the tenure of the 6th Administration, the GSSC was disbanded, most business units were centralised to the office of the Gauteng Premier (OoP) whilst Information Communication Technology (ICT) related functions formed what is now known as the Gauteng Department of eGovernment. A key objective of this Department is to create ICT-enabled public service delivery that improves efficiency and accessibility; to improve the transparency and accountability of the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) and empower citizens to participate more effectively in the decision-making process that impacts their experience with the government.

The table below provides data on the population of the above-mentioned three Gauteng Provincial Departments as at 31 August 2022 (the date that data collection was concluded) was follows:

Table 3: Sample Population

Sum of TOTAL	GENDER		
ORGANISATION	FEMALE	MALE	Grand Total
GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF E-GOVERNMENT	441	368	809
GAUTENG EDUCATION	64418	28294	92712
GAUTENG OFFICE OF THE PREMIER	386	246	632
Grand Total	65245	28908	94153

Table 3: Sample Population *(as reported by: Wahed, 2022)*

The above data provides insight into the number of individuals that are affected by change management processes reflected on in this study. It provides insight into the sizes of the departments researched. Within the Gauteng Province, the OoP is considered the mini-Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the back-office support for the GPG. The significance of this is outlined in the following subsection 5.1.2.3.

Therefore, e-GOV does not have an Organisation Development Directorate nor a change management function. These functions are centralised in the Gauteng office

of the Premier (OoP). This was an unexpected finding. Whilst participants in e-GOV understood change management, they made reference to the fact that this function was centralised to the OoP and service providers. To obtain rich thick data, this study, therefore, found it necessary to broaden its scope by interviewing managers within the OoP, to gain understanding of the change management value chain.

Depending on the type of change that has emerged, the procedure followed is that the e-GOV will contact the OoP with a submission outlining the problem encountered/identified, the need for resolution of the problem, the motivation aligned with necessary prescripts and what value will be added if the problem is resolved and the need addressed. This submission will be delivered to the OoP for assessment. The procedure that unfolds is outlined by participants in paragraph two of the following subsection. The following subsection will commence with an introduction of what the OoP is and the role that they play in the Province, and in the change management value chain.

5.1.2.3 Gauteng Office of the Premier (OoP)

This study will use OoP and the term “back office” interchangeably when referring to the Gauteng Office of the Premier. This is because of the back-office support that OoP provides to the GPG departments. The below extract provides a more comprehensive description of what the OoP is, its function, and its objectives. This will provide further insight into why this department is critical to change management in the public sector.

> *The mission of the Gauteng Office of the Premier is to serve as a political nerve centre to ensure that government excels in fulfilling its mandate.*
>
> *The Office of the Premier's strategic objectives are: providing strategic support to the Premier and the Executive Council (EXCO) to ensure effective strategic leadership; facilitating the setting of clear priorities, enabling legislation and improved governance to realise desired policy outcomes; building a developmental state with the capacity to drive change and transformation to improve peoples' lives; forging social contracts with stakeholders to strengthen social partnerships to improve service delivery; ensuring that the Premier is provided with appropriate support to effectively execute his/her role and responsibilities; fostering strong intergovernmental and international relationships to advance the development agenda; driving the human resource policy and strategy to attract, develop and retain the best possible skills and to harness the productive energies of all Gauteng provincial government employees; driving integrated and effective government communication to ensure that people are well informed and have access to credible information about government services and programmes; and promoting participatory democracy to ensure ongoing interaction between government and civil society.*
>
> (Main, 2022)

Contextual findings of this study as a result of interviews conducted revealed the following information. They will be presented in quotes according to an internal value chain to provide this study with rich thick data. Participant G explained the following process: “in any given project, there must be an agreement regarding the scope of the project with a client department, a memorandum of understanding is drawn, if necessary. Dependent on the scope there must be an internal agreement on which of the key units will be facilitating the process due to limitation in capacity. Projects have different milestones, and stakeholders, one of them will be change management, who will then be responsible for the entire change management milestone within that project, in partnership with departmental communication directorates. It is clear who plays what role within the scope agreement. OoP is more on the advisory, project management and support approach with identified key milestones and with those who are the key role players in each of the milestones.” The change process then unfolds as follows:

The responsible director undertakes change readiness assessment. Participant D then outlined the process as follows: “the assessment assumes that change leadership has been visible, it has communicated change. Leadership has been audible, and it has been felt. The assessment is intended to provide insights on how ready the people who will be undergoing change are emotionally and psychologically. So that they do not become resistant of change because of how change would have been, introduced or imposed to them. A report on that change readiness assessment will be compiled. Change engagement sessions are then conducted to communicate the change itself.

It should be noted that processes within a change management process are interrelated because when undertaking resistance mitigation or even change engagement sessions themselves, it already touches on stakeholder engagement. The difference with stakeholder engagement is that it entails mapping out stakeholders involved in the process. It requires asking “Who are the stakeholders? What is their level of influence in the process? What is their level of interest in the project? And what critical behaviours are they already displaying, that could be detrimental to the success of the project.

The engagement sessions are used to identify different stakeholder behaviours, attitude and so on. These change engagement sessions start with senior managers and then filtered down to middle as well as junior managers as a cohort, in chamber where collective bargaining between the department and organised labour deliberate and then production staff as another cohort. From the year 2020, due to covid, most change engagement sessions were conducted virtually, that is via MS Teams. In some instances, particularly with production staff, physical meetings were conducted as they were more effective in terms of engagement of audience, and participation.

There is a standard practice where significant changes take place in the organisation and it is transitioning from the old to the new structure, or system. That standard practice is that it is important to communicate the purpose, the background, why the department is undergoing such a process. Who will be affected by such a change and how are they expected to be impacted by the change? The context of the public sector audience requires confirming to the audience that regardless of the changes taking place, no one will be worse off as a result of this change, that it will not impact the salary, it will not be altered, there will not be a demotion.

Then a question-and-answer session unfolds, and it is here where an assessment can be made if the message was understood, identify what the mood was like. Assess the type of questions people are raising, the disposition they are in, the tone are they talking in, whether they are shouting and screaming, whether there are any expressions of frustrations because that information is required in order to do the next process which is called Resistance mitigation. A resistance mitigation plan should outline that these are the stakeholders, which must really be assessed. It will comprise of organized labour, executive management, the MEC, the HOD, and senior managers, middle and lower managers, and general staff members. All of them are mapped out according to their level of interest level of influence which is in a matrix format. Whatever form or display of behaviour that they emulate would then be added to that matrix. These are identified and mitigated for better change management transitions. This contributes towards a learning organisation, better equipped to undertake future changes.

Employee Health and Wellness interventions are significant to successful change management. This is evidenced by participant E’s statement that “Employee Health

and Wellness should be embedded within the holistic change management. Hence most of the time change specialists are also trained in organizational behaviour so that they understand they are able to contain employees to change processes and emerge at it an expected and not unexpected tangent." The other departmental subjects did not mention any employee health and wellness interventions as part of their change processes.

Participant D asserted that "the extent to which a change management process has succeeded or how well a department(s) have transitioned, through any change, including the covid phase as GPG should be assessed within the change framework itself. If the framework provides a measurement or yardstick, the very same yardstick should also be used to measure the success. The measurement can be in the form of assessing the success of what was introduced. Self-assessments on change or change assessment questionnaire from time to time just to assess how organizations have been faring, can also be used, to measure progress or success." Whilst this is a valid assertion, it seems that it is not relevant to the GDE as the majority of participants were not even aware of the framework in order to use it for assessment. No mention was made of a change assessment questionnaire and from this context it is unclear who would administer the assessment.

This entire section was mined exclusively through interviews and the review of related literature to obtain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of the departments and their approaches to change management. It provided the basis from which this research made analyses of the information with which discussions will be made to contribute to contemporary literature to the knowledge gap identified in the proceeding chapter six (6).

4.2 Managers in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments

This section of the study describes the findings in terms of the managers engaged. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of managers within the researched GPG department in order to align perspective with how they perceive and experience these change management approaches. This study does not claim that the findings or analyses presented in this section are generalisable to the entire GPG population.

4.2.1 Age group

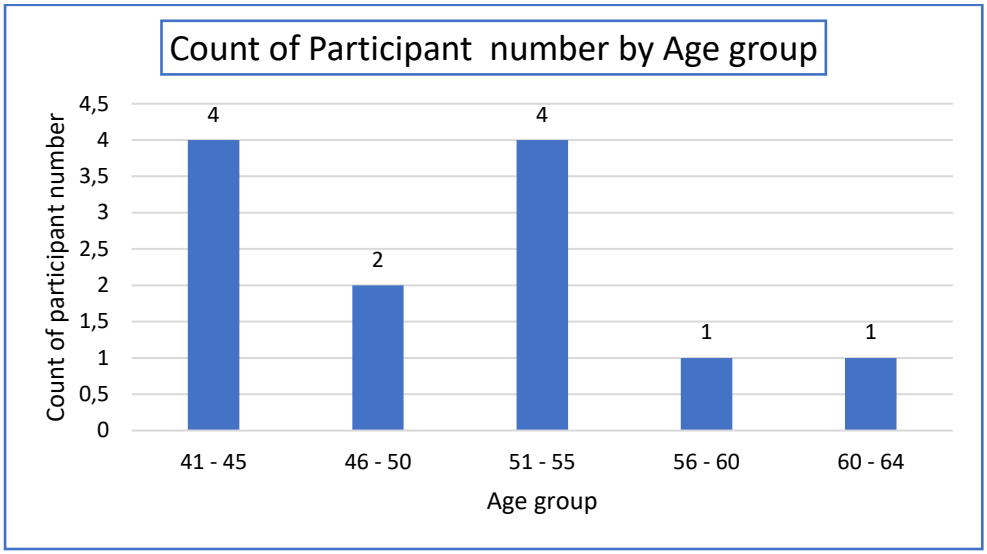


Figure 5: Participant Age group

Figure 5 illustrates a tie of a third of participants falling within the 41-45 and 51-55 age group category respectively. Interestingly, the majority (more than two thirds) of the participants of this study were between the ages of 41 - 55. This is known as the Generation X: Born 1965-1980 (41-56 years old) in generational classifications literature (Patterson 2007; Vejar 2018). In engaging the sample recruited through purposive and snowball criterion, it was interesting to find that the responsibility for change rests within a particular demography, that is generation x. Whilst this study cannot conclude for sure that they handle change or behave in a particular way, drawing on prior studies on generational characteristics provides us with perspective into the working styles, propensity for change and change agility of this demography.

A study was conducted by Weerarathne, Walpola, Piyasiri, Jayamal, Wijenayaka, & Pathirana, (2022) wherein working styles, social values and personal values of 297 respondents in generation 'X' and 'Y' working in selected service sector organisations were analysed. They describe the generation X characteristics as: being more loyal to the profession, result oriented, maintainers of discipline in the workplace, technologically skilled but not following up on updates, decision makers in fulfilment of own and organisational goals. They use realistic and practical approaches to solve problems at the workplace. The majority of senior or middle management positions are held by Generation 'X' employees. Hard work, education, and money are generally valued by these employees (Weerarathne et al., 2022).

The acceptance of change in an organization and the willingness to embrace it, is greatly influenced by personal employee experience. Generations respond differently to change, especially when it is related to technology (Ludviga & Sennikova, 2016). It is the environment in which each generation has been exposed to that shapes the way they see the world, the way they experience it and adapt to change (Beaman 2012). While they may not resist the change, generation X may not be as excited about change as younger generations (Buahene 2013). A new approach is most likely to be attractive to Generation X managers if they know the benefits and how it 'will work for them' (Beaman 2012). They resist change when they perceive that the change will hinder their ability to achieve results because it is important for this generation to see the potential of performance increase as a result of the change (Buahene 2013).

Most organizations experience the generation gap among their employees. It has been noted that the generation gap does have an impact on organizational efficiency and sustaining a healthy corporate environment as well. Concurrently, it has been noted that employees born between 1980 and 1995 have the highest potential and are the youngest workers. They are known as Millennials or the so-called Generation ‘Y’ (Pereira, Malik, Howe-walsh, Munjal, Hirekhan, 2017). Most Generation ‘Y’ people are confident, independent and target oriented. Success is of prime concern to them and they place utmost importance on career growth which describes how goal driven they are when compared to Generation ‘X’. This study notes that millennials were not represented in the sample, depending on perspective, this can be a challenge in that this study is void of the perspectives of this generation and the role they play in contributing to change in their respective spaces of work.

This generational analysis is significant to this study in that it provides insight into some of the generational characteristics of some managers within this demography within the GPG. It also provides context in terms of their perceptions to change approaches. This is supported by the following quotes “I remember when they gave out the first department phones. The first phones they gave to principals were BlackBerries. There were principals who went on pension with the BlackBerry still in the box” (participant H). “it's again an adult mentality to say that I cannot ask for help because what are people gonna say about me if I go out and ask someone in a lower position for assistance again” (participant K). In conclusion to the section on age group, a quote by participant G that sums up the discussion “I think mostly from a management point

of view is that I think there's fear of unknown and because we have different management styles." The general consequences of how the department experience change as a result of these generation x managers is dependent on management style versus age.

4.2.2 Job category and years of experience

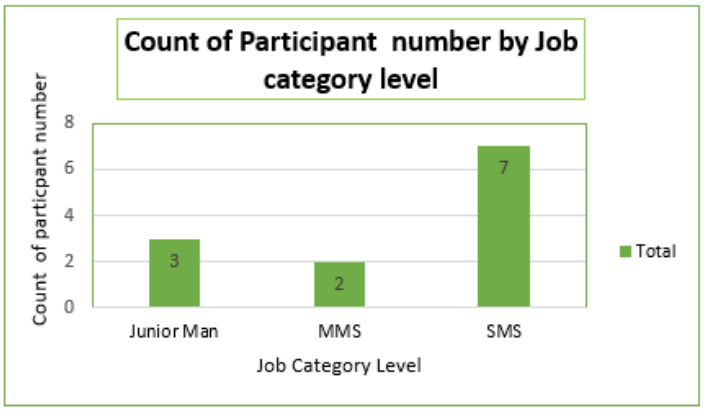


Figure 6: Count of participant number by job category

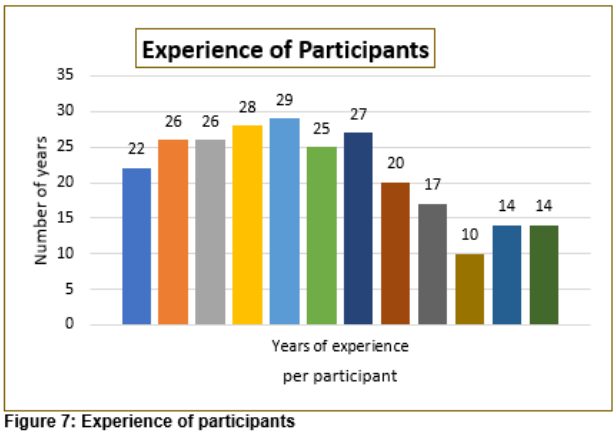


Figure 7: Experience of participants

The job category and experience of participants (figures 6 &7) are closely related in that every job category has inherent requirements that specify the minimum number of years' experience a prospective incumbent must have to qualify or be considered for a promotional post/job. As per the directive on compulsory capacity development mandatory training days and minimum entry requirements for SMS, as determined in terms of section 3(2) of the PSA, 1994 they set out minimum standards as follows:

Post type	Job category	Minimum number of years
Assistant Director	Junior Management	3 years relevant experience in a supervisory position
Deputy Director	Middle Management Services (MMS)	3 years relevant experience in a junior/middle management position
Director	Senior Management Services (SMS)	5 years relevant experience in a middle/ senior management position
Chief Director		5 years relevant experience in a senior management position

Table 4: Minimum requirements in terms of years of experience per job category

This section provides insight into the experience and exposure to the public sector that each of the participants possesses. This is significant because each of the participants

was drawing on their personal experience regarding the mechanics of the GPG and the change management involved and observed. Additionally, such experiences help promote high-quality performance, creativity, and prosocial/citizenship behaviours' that contribute to organizational success (Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, and Tay, 2019; Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, & Kerridge, 2019; Lysova, Fletcher, & El Baroudi, 2022).

This is study found that the response levels of the SMS were more strategic and organisation cognisant. MMS response levels were more on driving implementation on directorate specific mandates. Junior management responses levels were operational and unit specific. The participant perspectives regarding change management were pertinent in that this study was able to learn first-hand how job category and experience informs decision making which influences the current change practices, processes, policies, mechanisms in place, and the response thereof, for the GPG. Furthermore, perspective and understanding were gained by this research, on how managers in the different job categories in the GPG experience change approaches.

4.2.3 Perceptions on the current change approaches

The purpose of this subsection is to share the findings on the perceptions that managers had on change management and departmental change approaches based on their experience with these change management approaches. This study engaged with the managerial level and it acknowledges that is not the full picture of change processes - it is a lens of how those who manage change feel about the current change mechanisms in place. To additionally review and identify gaps in the approaches which can be used to inform decision making. This sub section will present rich data in the form of quotations of these managers. Quotations cited under this chapter, all represent the perceptions of the managers, that is the core of qualitative research designs.

When asked whether they thought that the current approach to change management in their department was effective, participants that have internal ODC had the following to say: Some participants explicitly expressed that they found it partially effective and expressed these challenges that give reasons to the "partial" categorisation.

“Managers don't want to take that responsibility of being a change agent” (participant D), “It's partly effective. You know there are those (some) managers who are part of the BMT or part of top management. They'll take decisions in those forums, but when they come out of that for them to become change agents, they distance themselves from those decisions.” (participant L).

Two participants did not provide a yes or no response and had the following to say: “To be honest with you. We are far [behind] as a department to be talking about change. We talk about change on paper, but, we always struggle to implement” (Participant F) and participant H said “The change management within the department would become very effective if all of us understood where are we feeding into” with reference to organisational identity.

There was a shared equal split of participants perceptions on OoP change management support and/or the use of external service providers, this is evidenced by the following quotes: “OoP support exists but they are not close enough to the people, to the department, to feel the ails. It is important to understand what the culture is like because culture influences the uptake of change management or whatever is being introduced and service providers don’t understand that” (participant K). “I've got a very, a negative viewpoint about the minimal level of support (from OoP), let me be quite honest and frank with you, I don't believe that there's the necessary capacity and competency at the level of the Office of the Premier to be able to support effectively” (participant B). The contrasting views were Participant C expressing that “Yes this approach is effective” and participant G that “I would say it's working for now amidst the challenges that we're having”

There were no responses that indicated an outright “no” response to this question. The remainder of participants indicated that they found the current approach to change management in their department effective, this is supported by participant A’s “well, it is effective” and participant C’s, “Yes this approach is effective as employees feel engaged and are able to be more productive.”

This research recommends that the quotations expressed throughout this chapter are read in context and as a collective as they all represent the participant perceptions regarding some or other element of change management. Whilst perceptions are personal and cannot be generalized, they provide some insight which can be useful

depending on the intent of the information used. The following chapter will present an analysis of the results and findings outlined in this chapter. The reader is reminded that the purpose of this study was to explore change approaches and mechanisms undertaken by provincial departments and examine what looking at the two departments reveals to us about change management at a Gauteng provincial government level. Additionally, this research sought to explore the perceptions that managers have on change management, departmental change approaches and what role a change management policy could play in the governance of change within the respective provincial government departments. This was done through a case study on two government departments namely The Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). An in-depth exploration of approaches to change management at a provincial level was undertaken with the aim of gaining a better understanding of change management dynamics within provincial departments in Gauteng, from a South African perspective as there is an academic knowledge gap in this regard.

4.3 Summary and conclusion of the chapter

This chapter presented the results and findings of this research. The main focus of this chapter was to answer the main and sub research questions as well as the research objectives, that were highlighted in chapter one of this study. The chapter presented the contextual commonalities found in current change practices, process and mechanisms in place within the GPG departments researched. Those are the management structures, the change responsibility and drivers, communication methods and dynamics and the dearth of change management policies within the respective departments. The intricacies and differences in current change practices, process and mechanisms were presented relative to the respective departments. It is in this chapter that the Office of the Gauteng Premier was a feature as a conduit of change management for the GDE and a key driver of change management for the e-Gov. This is because the e-GOV does not have an Organisation Development Directorate nor a change management function. These functions are centralised in the Gauteng office of the Premier (OoP). This was an unexpected finding which necessitated the description of the role that the OoP plays in the change management value chain within the GPG relative to the departments.

The perception of managers on the current approaches of change used within the GPG was one of the key focuses of the study. This is in support of previous studies that postulate that literature on organizational change recognizes the role leaders play in cultivating employees' acceptance and support for change, yet it lacks an understanding of how leaders affect followers' change reactions (Ling, Guo, & Chen, 2018; Oreg & Berson, 2019). Furthermore, this study recognised the to critical role that they play within government bureaucratic system in terms of managing the overall capacity of the system, driving change by steering deliberation and delivery networks. It is for that reason that this chapter presented the age group of the managers sampled and further described the job category, years of experience, its significance to the study and how that may influence their perceptions on the current approaches used in the respective departments.

Chapter 5

5. Analysis, Discussions, and Interpretation of research information

Upon undertaking this study, the researcher identified the following problem, that literature did not seem to differentiate between the management of change processes in the private and public sector (Stewart and Kringas 2003; Klarner, Probst and Soparnot 2008 in Kuipers et al. 2014). The supposition was that academics didn't fully appreciate the full differences and their implications. The findings of this study have revealed that although there are some similarities in themes within general change management literature, the contexts from where they operate have an influence. As academics have argued that it is not sufficient to discuss the 'what works' questions in isolation without describing the context in which they were answered (Cukurova et al., 2018). Context is significant because it influences processes, change agility, comprehension, and informs decision-making. Innovation and its uptake are influenced by context (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017). Studies have been conducted on conditions and challenges of innovation in the public sector, however some of the results are not applicable nor generalisable to all country contexts (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017; Nograsek, 2012; Torfing et al., 2019). Heino et al., (2021) further adds that interventions aimed at changing behaviour often fail to produce sustained effects, especially when applied to different contexts.

A desktop review of the existing literature revealed that studies on change management approaches within South African government departments are lacking. The focus of organizational change research in public management is on changes at the sectoral or local level. The effectiveness of change management techniques in the provincial government remains under researched, nor has it been critically questioned (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). The gap in literature meant that there was insufficient knowledge or understanding of contextual issues that influence change management approaches in provincial government departments. This may be due to numerous factors that include but are not limited to the manner in which change management issues are approached in practice (Nograsek, 2012).

Furthermore, there is a void in academic research literature on Gauteng Provincial Government departments with regard to the value and role of change management policies. Nograsek (2012) posits that poor change management strategies are the main cause of government change project failures. Roux (2002) asserts that no effective administrative action can take place if specific goals and objectives have not been set. The apparent lack of a valid framework for organisational change management within organisations is evidenced by the poor outcome rates of many change management programmes implemented within the workplace (Glensor, 2010).

In exploring current change approaches in the e-Gov and GDE departments to uncover the nature and dynamics of change management in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments, this study interrogated the following research question(s):

1.1 What are the current change practices, processes, policies, and mechanisms in place for the Gauteng Provincial Government department?

1.2 How do managers in the Gauteng Provincial Government departments perceive and experience these change management approaches?

To this end, this chapter interprets the significance of the results presented in chapter five (5) within the context of this study, to realise the connections to each chapter, and to ultimately answer the research question(s). These insights build this study's argument and contribution to the knowledge gap with contemporary information.

5.1 Discussion

This study sought to make distinction of how public sector dynamics influence change management, not necessarily to make comparison versus the private sector, but to explore the unique features of change in a case within the public sector. However, through the research process, it was revealed that there are some clear themes in general change management literature that this study reiterates as significant, even in the public sector case of the GPG. Amongst these themes are the significance of consistent and effective communication that filters through to all levels and stakeholders, the role that senior managers play as change champions within the organisation, and the need for managers to attend to the human dimension of change.

These themes and their relationship to the literature are illustrated in Section 4.1.1 of the findings chapter.

Kelly, & Muers, (2002) posit that the role of managers is to observe all rules and procedures are followed, to guide, define and meet performance targets. Key to their role is maintaining the overall capacity of the system by steering deliberation and delivery networks (Kelly, & Muers, 2002). This study supports the Kelly and Muers theory as it aligns with Section 4.1.1 of the findings chapter that delves into the commonalities in research findings that relate to the management structures, their capacity, roles and responsibilities as change drivers. The reason why managers were critical to this study is due to critical role that they play within government bureaucratic system in terms of managing the overall capacity of the system, driving change by steering deliberation and delivery networks. They interact daily with and support employees and have to report and review change mechanisms and approaches that are deemed ineffective or redundant. The literature on organizational change recognizes the role leaders play in cultivating employees' acceptance and support for change, yet it lacks an understanding of how leaders affect followers' change reactions (Ling, Guo, & Chen, 2018; Oreg & Berson, 2019). Managers are the key role players in devising policies and strategies that will assist the organisation reach the desired change objectives. This is significant because the purpose of research is to fundamentally contribute to a knowledge gap, to inform action. It is recommended that further research be conducted on individuals that are outside of management be interviewed to explore perceptions around change agility and the management thereof within the GPG to obtain a deeper understanding on how change is perceived on the ground.

The dearth in terms of change management competency required at middle and lower management in the public sector is concerning as these are the future senior managers of the departments. This is evidenced by the void of change management as a competency in the Middle Management Competency Framework. A lack of this competency at these levels of management means that these future leaders may be found wanting in the area of change management in the public sector. These managers are required to have a minimum of three years of experience within the respective job categories. The poor communication from top management and the lack of change ownership identified, contribute to the gap between the levels in

management. This coupled with lack of change management frameworks contribute to poor change reinforcement that exists and may continue to be perpetuated if these gaps are not addressed.

Furthermore, this study reinforces that the consideration of the specific context and the environment within which the change is unfolding, is critical. Context informs agility. The context of this study was established through the thick data obtained from interviews (asking the right people, the right questions), in-depth reading of literature, observations, and the lived experience of the researcher as a public servant. The challenges identified in the study were very bureaucratic channels, distance between managers in charge and other levels, silo operations, and the need for political and executive sponsors. The study found that many of the specific challenges faced by GPG were linked to broader governance challenges of the public service. For example, there is significant literature on challenges around operating in silos and managing the large-scale bureaucracies of the public service (Karakaya, 2020; Cinar et al., 2019; The Presidency RSA, 2020). This is further substantiated by Section 2.3 of the literature review, Section 4.1.1 of the findings chapter and the following quotes from participants of this research; “The whole issue about delegations, and rules is stifling in the sense that it makes response to the change slow, if I can put it that way” (participant B). “It is a bureaucratic system that can be mechanical because it is prescribed and it is given on how it should be organized so its systems are not flexible” (participant E). This finding is supported by a case study in the South Africa Covid-19 Country Report that the top-down, militaristic approach adopted widely in government, including the use of labels like ‘command centre’ and ‘war room’ contributed to change management challenges encountered by employees (Gauteng Province, 2021). This is because not all managers communicate decisions made in these sitting timeously or effectively and it delayed the reception of communication and sometimes distorted the messages received by the lower levels of government employees. This highlights that some key change management challenges are specific to the public sector context, and also that some solutions may be a part of wider processes to professionalise and stream-line the public sector (Moti, 2019), and to better manage the political-administrative interface (van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016).

This study's analysis is that part of the solution to the challenges associated with the very bureaucratic channels and silo operations in the sector, is more effective communication, inclusivity, and participation. Researchers have consistently shown that poorly communicated organizational leaders and organizations can pose one of the most significant challenges to employees undergoing organizational change (Barrett, 2002; Lewis, 2019; Yue, 2021). This reinforces existing change management literature (see Cinar et al., 2019; Okemba, 2018; Piercy et al., 2013) and further argues that this solution is relevant to the GPG context based on the following quotes from participants; "It is imperative that employees are engaged and are committed to changes otherwise change will be resisted (participant C), "It [effective communication, inclusivity, and participation] ensures that all the stakeholders that are involved in the change are aware of their role that they need to play, to obtain buy in" (participant F) and that "an organization that recognizes job functions and not just ranks is more effective" (participant E). Consequences of more effective communication, inclusivity, and participation are the minimization of the subtle duplication of functions, encourages collaboration based on expertise which opens up opportunities for the departments to extend resources, capacity, reach, and synergy.

5.2 Interpretation - new information presented by this study

As a result of the exploration, this study outlined the differences and similarities of change management approaches used within two government departments. It is crucial to highlight that the different departments within GPG have different levels of change capacity. This is partly linked to size, organisational structure, and departmental mandate. This results in different kinds of change management processes, resources around change and stakeholders involved i.e the OD Directorate, service providers and the study provided insight on the key role that the office of the premier plays within the change management value chain. An analysis of the findings revealed that a common consequence of the current approaches used by the respective departments is a lack of change ownership that results in poor reinforcement of change. This means that departments that rely on back office or service providers to implement departmental change (regardless of magnitude or type of change) do not have or take full ownership of the change. This is supported by the following quote "Once you bring in smaller department, you're going to have dynamics of 12 other departments in the project and if you go in all of them ne. What you will

find is that once we talk change management, they will tell you we don't do change management. So, they're still going to send it back to OoP and when you come to us. We would say we are doing certain elements of change management depending on the type of change" (participant G). Departments that have internal ODC similarly express that "the reason we involve management is that we want management to own their change. That's the main purpose. They mustn't say it's OD saying this, they must know and understand why there's that change and motivate their own subordinates (participant J). The consequence of lack of change ownership results in poor reinforcement of change within the GPG departments. It is important to note insofar as, at least in some things, this presents a challenge in the ability of the GPG to change together – or move together in the same direction.

It was interesting to note that none of the participants in this study made reference to the DPSA Change Management NMOG Guide, although they all assumed that there was a related framework that existed at the DPSA. It is this framework that should inform a contextually suited departmental policy. A finding of this study was that none of the GPG departments had a change management policy. Part of the consequences of the void of a change management policy is lack of change ownership because the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are not explicit. This is supported by the following quotations from participants: "unpreparedness from the side of management itself, to respond to the change in working environments", and "Not to have a change policy framework? Not to know, what we should do when change comes and where to run to, me being an activist in operations, having managed changes I have not seen it, I cannot run to it., So we...I think, change management becomes organic, depending on the pressure".

Therefore, this study concludes that the nature of change management in the GPG departments is heavily influenced by context and dynamics which include but are not limited to, bureaucratic channels, silo operations, lack of knowledge of change management frameworks, the lack of effective and consistent communication. As a consequence of these prevalent contextual dynamics, it results in a lack of ownership and poor change reinforcement. This is evidenced by the slow uptake of implementation of innovative and progressive business processes such as the ESS and knowledge management underusage within GPG. That, whilst communication

exists, it doesn't always filter down to the lowest employees, this in turn results in lack of understanding regarding change and the ability of employees to locate themselves, their role and their value in the organisation. The participant perspectives regarding change management were pertinent in that this study was able to learn first-hand how job category and experience informs decision making which influences the current change practices, processes, policies, mechanisms in place, and the response thereof, for the GPG.

5.3 Summary and conclusion of the chapter

This chapter analysed and interpreted the key research findings organised in terms of themes in the previous chapter. It highlighted some of the key change management challenges are specific to the public sector context, such as poor communication, lack of knowledge of change management frameworks, and lack of change ownership from management and which result in poor reinforcement of change [making change stick].

The chapter identified that GPG departments have different levels of change capacity. This is partly linked to size, organisational structure, and departmental mandate. Furthermore, that despite the levels of change capacity and departmental mandate, the critical role that managers play in communication and steering change greatly influence the outcome of organisational change.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore change approaches and mechanisms undertaken by provincial departments and examine what looking at the two departments would reveal to us about change management at a Gauteng provincial government level. This research explored the perceptions that managers had on change management, departmental change approaches and what role a change management policy could play in the governance of change within the respective provincial government departments. This was done through a case study on two government departments namely The Gauteng Department of e-Government (e-Gov) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). This in-depth exploration of approaches to change management at a provincial level was undertaken with the aim

of gaining a better understanding of change management dynamics within provincial departments in Gauteng, to contribute to the academic knowledge gap in this regard.

The study found that the nature of change is characterised by a lack of ownership and poor reinforcement of change in the GPG. The following inferences can be drawn from this finding, that managers must be capacitated on their role, and core management competencies to reinforce the ownership of change within their directorates and departments. As discussed in commonalities in research findings section 4.1.1, the SMS Handbook that requires that senior managers within the public service should have the “ability to initiate and support organisational transformation and change in order to successfully implement new initiatives and deliver on service delivery commitments” (DPSA, 2003). The involvement of key stakeholders in change management processes such as employees, and labour unions as outlined in the findings chapter, influences the reinforcement of change in the organisation due to increased buy-in. That, whilst communication exists, it doesn’t always filter down to the lowest employees therefore, inclusion and participation can be enhanced by conducting consistent and effective staff meetings, management feedback sessions, change readiness surveys and the results thereof to improve the current approaches to change management. This is further supported by the supposition that the communication patterns of executive leaders during organisational change remain largely understudied (Yue, 2021).

The participant perspectives regarding change management were pertinent in that this study was able to learn first-hand how job category and experience informs decision making, which influences the current change practices, processes, policies, mechanisms in place, and the response thereof within GPG departments. Their knowledge provided a lens through which we understood the dynamics that influence the nature of change management in practice. This study focused on managers as drivers of organisational change and so acknowledges that while this focus was revealing and insightful in terms of the task of managing change, there remains further study to interrogate the perceptions of those who experience change lower down in the organisational structures of GPG.

This research report was structured as follows; the research problem and questions were identified, thus justifying the need for this study. A literature review was

conducted discussing Change Management and Organisational Development as a theoretical framework which assisted this research with unpacking change management, contextualizing it to the public sector, locating it within a body of existing literature, drawing connections, and pointing out gaps in the literature. Aspects of literature relevant to this study as change management models and approaches to were presented. The study's adopted research methodology, approach and design as well as a sampling strategy were outlined, providing a road map on how this study went about obtaining information. This was proceeded by an account of ways in which data was managed, analysed and interpreted. An outline of the study's limitations, feasibility and positionality was described before the presentation of the study's findings, discussions and finally conclusions were finally drawn.

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